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## Amir, Kazakh president review bilateral ties

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani discussed with President of the friendly Republic of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, bilateral relations between the two countries. This came during a phone call His Highness the Amir received yesterday from the president of Kazakhstan. During the call, they discussed regional and global developments, in addition to a range of topics of shared concern. **(QNA)**

## NHRC, Lekhwiya sign co-operation deal

The National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Internal Security Force (Lekhwiya) with the aim of strengthening the relationship between them, given their shared concerns and interests in the field of human rights, the exchange of opinions, and the sharing of expertise and experiences in this area to serve their common goals. The memorandum was signed by NHRC's Secretary-General Sultan Hassan al-Jamali and Chairman of the Cultural Committee of Lekhwiya Col Khalifa Abdullah al-Attayah.

## QFFD contributes \$1mn to UNFPA

Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) signed a \$1mn core contribution agreement to support UNFPA's regular resources. This contribution aims to bolster UNFPA's efforts in promoting reproductive health, and population data utilisation to support sustainable development across communities worldwide, leading to a healthier future for women, girls and young people. **Page 3**

## Modi's party loses outright majority

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi looked set yesterday to retain power at the head of a ruling coalition but his Hindu nationalist party lost its outright majority for the first time in a decade as voters defied predictions of another landslide. The BJP itself had won or was leading in only 240, well down from the 303 it took five years ago. The election commission figures showed the BJP and its allies on track to win at least 291 seats out of a total of 543, enough for a parliamentary majority. **Page 9**

## Spanish court summons PM's wife

A Madrid court has summoned Begona Gomez, wife of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, to appear before a judge on July 5 over allegations of corruption and influence peddling that spurred her husband to consider resigning in April. The request was made as part of a preliminary inquiry into whether she had used her position to influence business dealings, the investigations court said. **Page 11**

## Hezbollah, Israel ready for war

Israel is ready for an offensive along the northern border with Lebanon and is nearing a decision, the chief of staff said yesterday, as the Hezbollah movement said it was not seeking to widen the conflict but was ready to fight any war imposed on it. The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, which has been fought in parallel to the Gaza war, has intensified in recent days, adding to concerns that an even wider confrontation could break out between the heavily armed adversaries. **Page 8**

# World urged to pressure Israel, Hamas to reach deal to end war

● Proposal now includes positions  
closer to the demands of the two sides

QNA  
Doha

Official Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), Dr Majed bin Mohamed al-Ansari called on the international community to pressure the Israeli and Palestinian sides to accept US President Joe Biden's internationally-backed proposal to end the war in the Gaza Strip, and reach a prisoner exchange deal between the two sides.

Delivering the MoFA's weekly media briefing, Dr al-Ansari said that military solutions do not lead to results, stressing the need for both parties to negotiate, and for an urgent humanitarian aid access.

He added that the Qatar-Egypt-US sponsored negotiations round between Hamas and the Israeli occupation forces is closely linked to the principles set by President Biden in his last speech. He added that both sides now have clear ideas on the table to negotiate.

He said that an Israeli proposal reflecting the principles as stated by President Biden was conveyed to Hamas, and the document now includes positions closer than before to the positions of the two sides. He noted that all sides were doing their best to put the final touches to reach an agreement.

Dr al-Ansari said Qatar had been pressing on unwavering contacts with all parties since the beginning of this round of negotiations. Yet, he said it was difficult to put a timeframe for these negotiations, because they are linked to many on-the-ground situations, and that what can be done is to always emphasise and focus on the need to reach an immediate ceasefire deal.

The issue now is related to the existence of clear positions from both parties on President Biden's principles and the ideas on the table, he added.

To date, the Israeli aggression has left over 36,000 martyrs in the Gaza Strip and over 82,000 wounded, while over one million



Dr Majed al-Ansari addressing the media yesterday.

displaced Palestinians are facing a new displacement wave as they are directly targeted, he said.

The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) announced that it is unable to provide aid, after being stopped at the Rafah crossing by the occupation. He stressed that humanitarian aid delivery should not be linked to any political reason.

Commenting on the humanitarian disaster in the Gaza Strip, he said it is worsening every day and has not reached an end — a fact that must provide a sufficient reason for the international community and the two conflicting parties to realise that reaching an agreement is no longer linked to narrow political calculations, but to this catastrophic humanitarian situation in the enclave, the worsening security and political repercussions in Israel, the attacks in northern Israel, and the confrontations in northern and central Gaza, which cast their shadows on the situation on the ground.

Dr al-Ansari said the ongoing negotiations are held in Cairo and Doha, or via means of communication, until both parties reach a language of agreement to move to direct meetings at the highest levels. **To Page 4**

## PM meets GCC education ministers



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with participants in the 8th meeting of the Committee of Ministers of Education of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries. HE Sheikh Mohamed welcomed the guests, wishing them success in their meeting in Doha. **(QNA) Page 5**

# HBKU to establish International Islamic Bioethics Association

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has initiated the establishment and hosting of the International Islamic Bioethics Association at the university, president Dr Ahmad M Hasnah said yesterday.

"In supporting the development and advancing of the Islamic bioethics' knowledge generation and contribution, we are proud to announce the initiation of establishing and hosting of the International Islamic Bioethics Association at Hamad Bin Khalifa University," he explained.

Dr Hasnah was addressing the inaugural session of the 17th edition of the World Congress of Bioethics at Qatar National Convention Centre.

"We, at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, believe that no voice needs to be left out and discussions around bioethics must have all voices around the table, and that different perspectives have equal rights. As such, we have worked hard to achieve a more inclusive event, welcoming different voices and diverse approaches besides the usually dominant perspectives, in addition to providing opportunities for voices usually under represented from Asia, Africa, and South America," he said.

The official said that the main challenge facing humanity



Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser at the opening of the 17th World Congress of Bioethics. **PICTURE:** Aisha al-Musallam

has always been an ethical one whether in science, medicine, AI, or global politics.

"We live in a very dynamic world; ethical challenges are rising on multiple fronts and dimensions and are impacting humanity. No single point of view, philosophy, or approach should be the sole custodian of ethical discussions and policy formation. A more comprehensive multi views discussions need to be adopted" explained, Dr Hasnah.

The HBKU president said that the role of religion is a crucial one in the biomedical area.

"Discussions shaping policies should not neglect people's beliefs as they are part of their lives

and it is important to be captured in any policy creation. It is also, important to recognise that, heavenly religions were revealed to provide guiding principles for humanity irrespective of time and geological place providing an important basis to the ethical discussion away from trial and error or time bounded approach," he continued.

Dr Hasnah pointed out that there is a great wealth in Islamic civilisation when it comes to ethics. "We need to have our voice and knowledge in that area well represented on the global scene and work with the global community to address the bioethical challenges," he noted. **To Page 12**

# Hamas wants permanent truce, full Israeli pullout

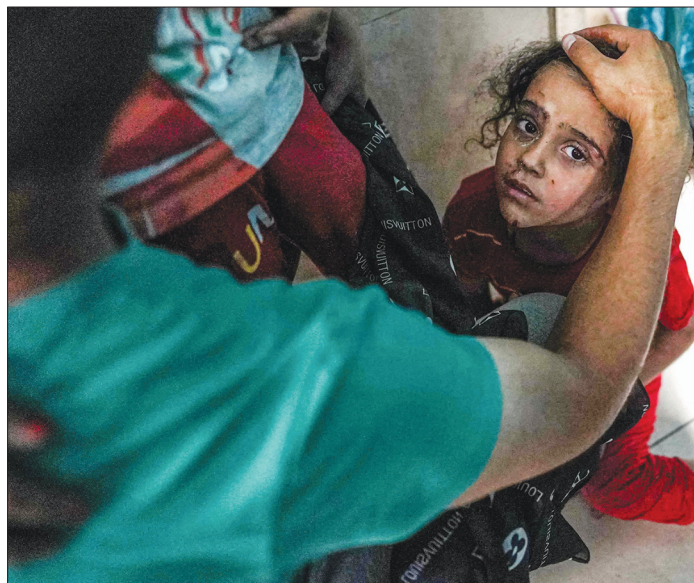
Reuters  
Cairo

Hamas cannot agree to any deal unless Israel makes a "clear" commitment to a permanent ceasefire and a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, a senior official from the Palestinian militant group said yesterday.

Qatar, which alongside the United States and Egypt has been mediating talks between Hamas and Israel, has also urged

Israel to provide a clear position that has the backing of its entire government to reach a deal.

"We cannot agree to an agreement that doesn't secure, guarantee, and ensure a permanent ceasefire, a complete withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and completing a real serious swap deal accordingly," Osama Hamdan, a Hamas official, told a televised press conference.



An injured child reacts as she sits on the floor at a ward at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip yesterday.

A three-phase proposal presented by US President Joe Biden on Friday involved in its first phase a six-week ceasefire when Israeli forces would withdraw from "all populated areas" of Gaza and some hostages - including the elderly and women - would be freed in exchange for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Under that plan, Hamas and Israel would negotiate in the same phase a permanent ceasefire that Biden said would last "as long as Hamas lives up to its commitments."

In the second phase, Biden said there would be an exchange for all remaining living hostages, including male soldiers, Israeli forces would withdraw from Gaza and the permanent ceasefire would begin.

Hamdan said: "Israel only wants one phase where it takes all its hostages, then it resumes its aggres-

sion and war on our people."

"We ask mediators to get a clear position from the Israeli occupation to commit to a permanent ceasefire and a complete withdrawal," he added.

Hamas has previously said it viewed the contents of the proposal positively.

The United States said on Sunday that if Hamas accepted the proposed plan it expected Israel to follow suit.

The third phase in the proposal would include a major reconstruction plan for the enclave, which has been devastated by eight months of war, and the return of the remains of dead hostages to their families.

A senior Hamas official in Beirut accused Israel of prolonging truce negotiations and repeated the Palestinian militant group's position rejecting any deal that excludes a permanent ceasefire. **Page 8**





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## WHO chief applauds Qatar's contribution

**QNA**  
Geneva

Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has praised the humanitarian role played by Qatar and the support it provides in the health sector, especially for Palestinian victims and displaced people in the Gaza Strip.

This came during the meeting of HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari in Geneva yesterday with the WHO director-general. The two sides discussed aspects of co-operation between Qatar and the WHO in various health fields, in addition to the most prominent decisions of the meetings of the 77th session of the World Health Assembly, which was recently concluded in Geneva, and the most prominent topics being discussed by the 155th session of the WHO Executive Council, which concluded later yesterday.

The meeting also discussed the 'Sports for Health' partnership between, the WHO, and FIFA, after the World Health Assembly adopted a resolution led by Qatar entitled Strengthening Health and Well-Being through Sport Events.

The resolution serves as a lasting legacy for partnership and provides a framework through which future sports events can be leveraged to enhance and protect health.

Meanwhile, Qatar has participated in a number of events accompanying the World Health Assembly meetings.

Qatar participated in organising two events, the first on strengthening the capabilities of the workforce in health emergencies, and the second to launch a group of friends of the World Health Organisation Academy. Qatar's delegation also participated in two other events, the first on diabetes, health and wellness, and the second under the title 'Unifying Voices for... Action on gynaecological cancer in the Eastern Mediterranean Region'.

In his speech at the event, Assistant Minister of Public Health Dr Saleh Ali al-Marri said that the vision of the Global Health Emergencies Authority is to strengthen the workforce in emergency situations. "Healthcare is in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030, the Third National Development Strategy (2024-2030) and the National Health Strategy, and its priorities include building a strong, flexible and effective healthcare system."

Sheikh Dr Mohamed bin Hamad al-Thani, Director of the Department of Non-communicable Disease Prevention Programmes at the Ministry of Public Health, reviewed the experience of Qatar in combating diabetes, and working to reduce its cases and delay its incidence through prevention services, primary, secondary and tertiary care.

## PM meets members of Lebanese House of Representatives in Doha



HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani met yesterday with the visiting members of Lebanon's House of Representatives from the Lebanese Forces Party. The latest developments in Lebanon and the situation in the region were discussed during the meeting. **(QNA)**

## PM receives phone call from UK foreign secretary

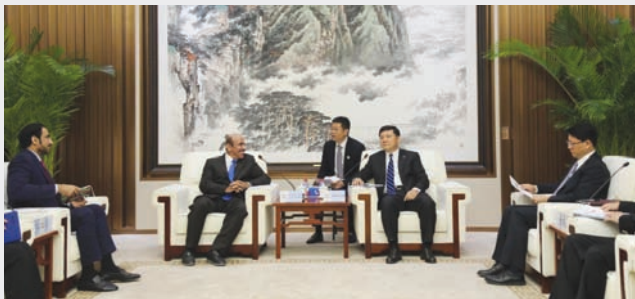
HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani received a phone call yesterday from UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs David Cameron. They discussed during the call co-operation relations between Qatar and the UK and ways to support and enhance them. They also discussed the severe situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories and the latest developments in the joint mediation efforts aimed at stopping the war on the Strip, in addition to several topics of mutual interest. **(QNA)**

## AlKhater meets German envoy



HE the Minister of State for International Co-operation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Lolwah bint Rashid AlKhater met yesterday with German ambassador to Qatar Lothar Freischlager. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to support and enhance them in various fields, in addition to the developments in the situation in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Palestinian territories, while emphasising the importance of reaching an immediate and permanent ceasefire agreement. **(QNA)**

## Al-Sulaiti meets Chinese official



HE the Minister of Transport Jassim bin Saif al-Sulaiti met in Beijing yesterday with President of the China Railway Construction Corp Limited (CRCC) Lixin Wang. The meeting discussed avenues of co-operation in railroad systems and their associated infrastructures, as well as benefiting from the investment opportunities in ecofriendly and smart technologies in these areas. **(QNA)**

## Qatar participates in meetings of WHO Executive Board

Qatar is participating in meetings of the 155th session of the Executive Board of the World Health Organisation (WHO) held in Geneva yesterday. The Qatari delegation is led by HE the Minister of Public Health Dr Hanan Mohamed al-Kuwari.

During the meeting, HE Dr al-Kuwari, chair of the Executive Board, handed over the chairpersonship of the Executive Board to Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN Office and other international organisations in Geneva, Matthew Anthony Wilson.

In her speech, HE Dr al-Kuwari extended her best wishes to the new chairman, expressing confidence in his leadership and the support from the board members.

She highlighted the challenges and achievements faced by the board, particularly noting the profound impact of conflicts on healthcare workers and facilities worldwide.

She emphasised that the instability caused by violence and war not only jeopardises healthcare delivery but also poses risks for disease outbreaks and the deterioration of health among

people with chronic conditions and disabilities.

She underscored the significance of the Executive Board's special session in December 2023 concerning Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territory amid the Israeli aggression, emphasising the importance of ensuring the safety and security of healthcare workers and facilities globally. She also stressed the importance of the adoption of the Health and Peace resolution by the World Health Assembly, marking a crucial step towards ensuring health for all. **(QNA)**

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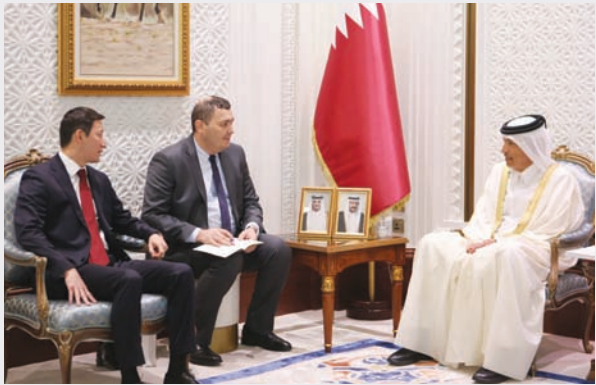


## UN High Commissioner for Refugees meets Qatar’s permanent representative

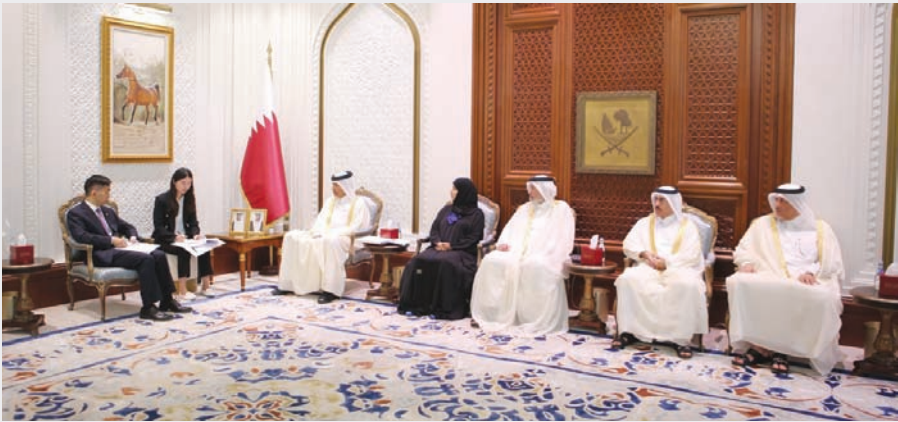
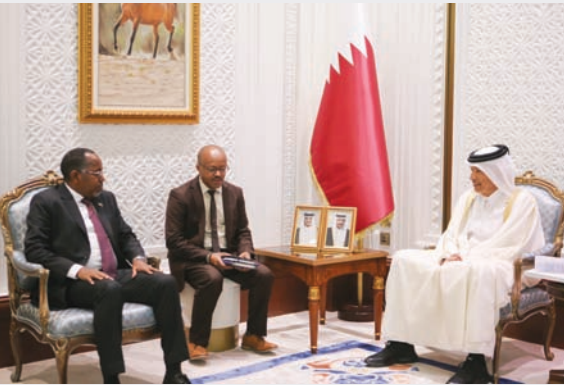


The UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi met with Qatar’s Permanent Representative to the UN HE Sheikha Alya Ahmed bin Saif al-Thani in New York. During the meeting, the close partnership between Qatar and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was discussed, as well as ways to develop co-operation in order to respond to the record levels of displacement witnessed worldwide. Grandi expressed the United Nations’ appreciation for the humanitarian role of Qatar in responding to many displacement situations in the world. **(QNA)**

## Speaker of Shura Council meets diplomats



HE the Speaker of the Shura Council Hassan bin Abdullah al-Ghanem met separately yesterday with Chinese ambassador Cao Xiaolin, Uzbekistan’s ambassador Ashraf Khodjaev, and Ethiopian ambassador Faisal Ali Ibrahim. Qatar’s parliamentary co-operation relations with China, Uzbekistan and Ethiopia as well as ways to strengthen and develop them were discussed during the meetings. **(QNA)**



## Amir sends cables of congratulations to Mexico’s president-elect

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, His Highness the Deputy Amir Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad al-Thani and HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani sent yesterday cables of congratulations to Claudia Sheinbaum on the occasion of her election as President of Mexico, wishing her success and for the relations between the two countries further development and growth. **(QNA)**

## Qatar chairs meeting of senior officials of GCC ministries of labour

Qatar chaired the meeting of senior officials of the GCC labour ministries and the GCC countries’ heads of delegations, on the sidelines of their participation in the 112th session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva, in the presence of Director-General of the Executive Office of the Council of Ministers of Labour and the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs of the GCC Mohamed bin Hassan al-Obaidli. The meeting, facilitated by Assistant Undersecretary for Migrant Labour Affairs at the Ministry of Labour Sheikhha Najwa bint Abdulrahman bin Nasser al-Thani, addressed the conference agenda and ways to align GCC countries’ stances on the issues. **(QNA)**

## World urged to pressure Israel, Hamas to reach deal to end war

### From Page 1

Since the first day of this mediation and all the mediations it has undertaken, Qatar has engaged in a positive and sincere manner with the aim of reaching an end to human suffering and an end to the crisis, he added. When Qatar announced earlier it was re-evaluating its role as a mediator, it was primarily linked to the seriousness of the parties in reaching a solution to this crisis and the effectiveness of the Qatari role, he added, noting Qatar’s ongoing commitment to mediation efforts as long as there is a possibility to end the crisis and suffering of civilians, return Palestinians to their homes, reconstruct Gaza and achieve the demands of the Palestinian people. Meanwhile, Dr al-Ansari highlighted the MoFA’s efforts including hosting the meeting of the 160th Ministerial Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) on Sunday, under the chairmanship of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohamed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani. On the sidelines of this meeting and within the framework of Qatar’s presidency of the current session, two joint ministerial meetings will be held between the GCC and Yemen and Turkiye, respectively.



MANATEQ

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TC-06-2024	خدمات النظافة والضيافة Cleaning and Hospitality Services	30,000.00 QR	1,000.00 QR	July 02 <sup>nd</sup> 2024 12:00pm

**Description of work :**  
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**Collection Date and Location:**  
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MANATEQ - Small and Medium Industries Zone  
Procurement & Contracts Department  
Email: [procurement@manateq.qa](mailto:procurement@manateq.qa)

**وصف العمل:**  
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Economic Zones Company reserves its right in modifying terms of the tender at any time and/or cancelling the tender at any time without need of providing reasons and without any responsibility on its part whatever its kind

## QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY INVITATION TO TENDER

### QAFCO ANNOUNCES THE FOLLOWING TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION OF WORKS	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER FEE RECEIPT SUBMISSION DATES	TENDER CLOSING DATE
RFQ-6000000699	DESIGN, ENGINEERING, PROCUREMENT, FABRICATION, CONSTRUCTION, INSTALLATION, INSPECTION, TESTING & COMMISSIONING OF NEW FLOW METER SKID SYSTEM AT JETTY-2	500/- (Non-refundable)	225,000,00/- (Two Hundred Twenty-five Thousand only)	05.06.2024 06.06.2024 09.06.2024 10.06.2024 11.06.2024 12.06.2024 13.06.2024	18.07.2024

#### GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

- During the period this tender is offered, the interested bidders shall first deposit appropriate Tender Fee amount in cash (Cheque will not be accepted) into Company’s following Account at any QNB branch:
  - Account Name : **QATAR FERTILISER COMPANY (QAFCO)**
  - Account Number : **0013-025828-058**
  - IBAN : **QA51QNBA0000000000013025828058**
  - Bank Name : **QATAR NATIONAL BANK**
- The interested Bidders shall mention their company’s name and Tender Number on the payment receipt provided by the bank and submit it as Tender Fee receipt.
- Besides the Tender fee receipt (which should have the Tender Number and bidder’s name clearly mentioned on it), interested bidders shall also submit a copy of the valid Commercial Registration, an authorization letter from their company with the name, telephone, fax and e-mail ID of the focal point for this tender **(Very Important)**, during the submission of Tender Fee Receipt for ensuring electronic receipt of the Tender Document.
- Tender Fee Receipt along with the specified documents shall be submitted to [purchase@qafco.com.qa](mailto:purchase@qafco.com.qa) on the dates indicated above, after payment of Tender Fee (nonrefundable).
- After submission of the above documents to the above email, Tender Document will be provided through an electronic platform separately after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date.
- For any queries related to non-receipt of the tender documents after the last date of Tender Fee Receipt Submission Date, you may contact at 'purchase@qafco.com.qa' or on 44227797
- Technical & Commercial details and Submission Procedures will be specified in the Tender Documents.
- The Company will not consider any offer without the enclosure of the Tender Bond.
- Bids shall be submitted at QAFCO Tender Office, between 09:30 – 11 :00 hours during the Holy month of Ramadan and 09:30 – 11:30 hours and 12:30 – 14:00 hours, of any working day of the Company, on/before the "Tender Closing Date".



## QatarEnergy LNG Tender Invitation

No.	TENDER NUMBER / DESCRIPTION	TENDER ISSUE PERIOD	TENDER FEE (QAR)	TENDER BOND (QAR)	TENDER CLOSING DATE
1	SUP/P/OON/6643/24, B65 SUPPLY OF HV/LV CABLES	02/06/2024 to 06/06/2024	0	35,000	20/06/2024

#### Scope of Work:

CABLE HIGH VOLTAGE, TYPE: XLPE/AWA/PVC, NO.OF CORE: 1 CORE, CONDUCTOR SIZE: 300 SQ MM, VOLTAGE RATING: 66 KV, CONDUCTOR MATERIAL: COPPER, INSULATION MATERIAL: XLPE

**Bid Validity:** Bid should be valid for 180 calendar days from the Tender Closing Date.

#### Place for Tender Collection and Bid Submission:

ITT document for this tender will be available in QatarEnergy LNG website under Suppliers tab >Current Open Tenders. The bids shall be submitted through the QatarEnergy LNG online platform (SMART by GEP).

**Note:** Effective from 1st July 2023, bids received from Local Companies (established under the Laws of State of Qatar with local Commercial Registration) who are not in possession of an ICV score in the ICV portal by Bid Closing Date (or commercial bid submission date if separately mentioned/notified) will not be accepted. Local Company that has been established for less than 2 years and insurance companies are exempted from this requirement. For further details please visit ICV Digital Portal:- <https://icv.qa/US>



# EAA celebrates first group of Afghan refugee graduates

The Education Above All (EAA) Foundation celebrated, with the support of its strategic partner, the Qatar Fund for Development (QFFD), the graduation of the first group, of 25 Afghan refugee students.

They are part of the total group of 250 students in the Qatar Scholarship for Afghans Project (QSAP) from the US university, Bard College in New York, a statement from EAA Foundation said yesterday.

The Afghan students, all of whom had their education interrupted when they were residing in their home country, were provided with the opportunity through EAA's QSAP to complete their studies and ultimately enhance their future professional opportunities, helping them grow into productive, engaged citizens.

Speaking about the graduates' success, Talal al-Hothal, direc-

tor of the Al Fakhoora Programme at EAA Foundation, said: "We are proud of our graduates, whose success today highlights the crucial role higher education plays in the empowerment of refugees and displaced youth. Our programme leverages strategic international partnerships to amplify the impact of our scholarships, and these collaborations have made it possible for us to offer Afghan students many opportunities for advancement, innovation, and success. We look forward to witnessing the positive changes they will bring to the world."

"Congratulations to the QSAP students graduating from Bard and other colleges and universities across the US," said Jonah Kokodyniak, executive vice-president of the Institute of International Education (IIE).

"We at IIE have been honoured



to support these talented students and to work with the programme's partners and word-class higher education institutions like Bard College to help them realise their full potential."

The QSAP has provided full scholarships for Afghan refugees at

more than 40 colleges and universities throughout the US, including Bard College, Rutgers University, and the University of Texas at Austin, among others.

QSAP was founded in 2021 through a collaboration between EAA Foundation, QFFD, and



project partners the IEE, Afghan Future Fund, Schmidt Futures, the Yalda Hakim Foundation, and the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisers Fund.

Afghanistan faces a critical humanitarian crisis, and UNHCR estimates that 23.7mn people in

the country are in dire need of immediate and vital humanitarian relief. UNHCR also reports more than 3.25mn internally displaced people and 5.3mn Afghan refugees and asylum seekers who are registered in neighbouring countries, the statement added.

# Qatar hosts meetings of GCC education ministers

Qatar yesterday hosted the 8th meeting of GCC education ministers and the 24th meeting of GCC ministers of higher education and scientific research. HE the Minister of Education and Higher Education Buthaina bint Ali al-Jabr al-Nuaimi chaired the two meetings in the presence of GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi.

At the outset, HE al-Nuaimi extended thanks and appreciation to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani and leaders of the GCC countries for their support and care for education. She thanked Oman for its fruitful presidency of the committee of the GCC education ministers, and the GCC General Secretariat for their tireless efforts in supporting and facilitating the committee's work.

HE al-Nuaimi noted that the 8th meeting of GCC education ministers would discuss a host of significant topics and issues, especially those related to the directives of leaders of the GCC countries, including the Riyadh Declaration of the 42nd session of the Supreme Council of the GCC countries regarding enhancing international co-operation, and the Al-Ula Declaration for the 41st session on education during crises.

She stressed that all these announcements reflect the shared future vision of the leaders and their great interest in developing education in the GCC countries.

In this context, she indicated that the meeting's agenda includes vital topics, including co-operation in achieving the fourth goal of the sustainable development goals of quality education, enhancing co-operation with countries and international and regional organisations, and discussing the protection of moral, religious and family values in Gulf societies, in addition to topics and proposals related information security to students, artificial intelligence, and on-the-job training.

She emphasised that these topics reflect ongoing efforts to enhance the quality of education and support innovation, digital integration, and cybersecurity in education. HE al-Nuaimi added that the future of education is linked to the ability to exchange experiences, develop capabilities, and benefit from the successful experiences of other countries.

GCC countries must constantly think about the suitability of their educational systems to the needs of today and tomorrow, focus on strengthening their educational systems to meet future challenges, develop the educational and moral values of young people, determine the skills required for the future work market, and develop effective and innovative educational policies to support achieving the goals of the 2030 sustainable development plan.

The GCC Secretary-General thanked His Highness the Amir for the constant and ongoing support for the joint Gulf action, and for the tireless efforts to enhance the educational process and raise the efficiency of the education system in the GCC countries.

He also noted the interest and keenness of the GCC leaders countries to advance the process of joint Gulf action to broader areas and horizons. He said that this meeting comes to achieve this trend by seeking to contribute to creating organisations that serve Gulf action. In her speech at the 24th meeting of the GCC ministers, HE al-Nuaimi said that rapid scientific developments in the modern era have led to radical changes in the structure of human societies with all their components, necessitating new roles for institutions of higher education and scientific research in an era characterised by cognitive and information momentum that is based on a participatory approach built on the



exchange of knowledge and ideas in a scientific environment that does not recognise the limits of time or place.

She revealed that a forum will be held in Doha next October to enhance capabilities and competencies in this field, in addition to the initiative to establish the "My Gulf University" electronic platform, which allows students in Gulf countries to review the mechanism of applying to universities.

In this context, HE the Minister inaugurated this platform and announced its launch. Albudaiwi highlighted during his speech that the leaders of the GCC countries are resolute in their conviction that the higher education sector is a vital catalyst for achieving comprehensive development in societies, emphasising that education is a strategic investment for the GCC countries, as evident in the World Bank's reports on the progress of the Co-operation Council countries in enhancing human capital, of which education is considered one of its most important pillars.

He also expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education for developing, hosting and launching the unified digital platform for universities, "My Gulf University", which connects over 40 universities and institutions of higher education and scientific research in the GCC countries, catering to more than 2mn students of both genders, in implementation of the decisions taken by the Supreme Council aimed at promoting digital transformation. (QNA)



# Ministry launches introductory tour of Qatar development plan in schools

To enhance students' awareness of the importance of sustainable development and support the Qatar National Vision 2030, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, in co-operation with the National Planning Council, launched an interactive initiative aimed at introducing students to the Third National Development Strategy for the period 2024-2030.

This initiative includes organising interactive experiences for students in several public secondary schools under the theme 'Exploring the Third National Development Strategy'. The initiative attracts high school and preparatory students from different schools. It is designed to enable students to explore Qatar's achievements and future goals within the Qatar National Vision 2030 framework.

The experience aims to motivate students to actively participate in achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030. It also aims to enhance students' sense of national belonging by highlighting the role of each individual in achieving strategic goals. It also aims to introduce them to how each segment of society, including women, youth, residents, businesses, and investors, contributes to sustainable development.

Maryam al-Nesef al-Boainain, Director of Schools and Students Affairs Department, said: "This initiative is not only an interactive experience but also a strategic step to enhance national awareness and belonging among students. We aspire to inspire a new generation of leaders who will contribute to the Qatar National Vision 2030 goals."



**This initiative includes organising interactive experiences for students in several public secondary schools under the theme 'Exploring the Third National Development Strategy'**

For his part, Abdullah al-Khanji, Director of the Public Relations and Communication Department from the National Planning Council, added: "The strategy tour in schools aims to improve students' work and achievements. The initiative also aims to enable them to create, innovate, produce, and participate in all aspects of development needed by the State of Qatar. The state has allocated all available means to make it one of the developed countries characterised by an attractive work environment adapted to the skills of the 21st century." (QNA)

# QNA receives award for innovation in using AI



Qatar News Agency (QNA) received an award for the innovation in using artificial intelligence (AI) at a ceremony held within Microsoft's exclusive event "Leading the Era of AI," held yesterday under the auspices and presence of HE the Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohamed bin Ali al-Mannai.

The QNA Director-General Ahmed bin Saeed al-Rumaihi received the award from HE al-Mannai in the pres-

ence of several officials, representatives of government agencies, experts, business leaders, innovators, and an elite group of Microsoft partners and customers.

QNA won the award for the innovation in using AI in recognition of its unprecedented achievements in the field of using and benefiting from modern technology and advancing digital transformation efforts in the field of media, especially with its use of the "audio and video analysis system," which is a

program based on AI in converting recorded video and audio clips into written text.

Al-Rumaihi appreciated the great support provided by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology to governmental and non-governmental agencies to advance the digital transformation sector in the country through the use of modern technology and advanced techniques and making use of AI to develop services and the work environment. (QNA)

# WAREHOUSE FOR RENT

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- ✔ Warehouse 600 Sqm/1200 Sqm
- ✔ Municipality Approved
- ✔ Civil Defence Approved
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Dana Alfardan to perform at 77th Estate Fiesolana Summer Festival in Tuscany

Acclaimed Qatari composer Dana Alfardan will give the debut public performance of her masterpiece Indigo at the historic 77th Estate Fiesolana Summer Festival in Tuscany, Italy's oldest outdoor festival, on July 17. Addressing a press conference yesterday at Florence's Teatro Della Pergola Theatre, she revealed that members of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra and the La Filarmonica - Filarmonica di Firenze, will join her alongside dancers from the Lyric Dance Company, headed by creative director and choreographer Alberto Canestro, as part of the historic, cross-cultural creative extravaganza. The Dana concert marks the historic first public performance of an artist from the Gulf region in the Roman amphitheatre, a statement said. Fresh from her recent milestone appearance as the first Gulf musician to perform at the star-

studded Trophée Chopard Gala during the 77th Cannes Film Festival in May, this is the second time Dana has made musical history in 2024, as she continues to expand her flourishing presence across Europe with the critically-acclaimed Indigo. With its foundation in neoclassical music interposed with electronic elements, Indigo transcends conventional boundaries to create an unforgettable, immersive multi-sensory experience, merging sound and colour together. "As one of Europe's oldest and most established cultural events at one of Italy's most beautiful and significant ancient sites, history is quite literally at the heart of the Estate Fiesolana story," said Dana. "It is so exciting to be able to create a new chapter in our shared creative journey as part of this pioneering collaboration between Qatari and Italian musicians and artists - a true merging of East meets West.

"I am also incredibly proud to have the opportunity to present Indigo, an intensely personal and transformative piece of music, intended to guide audiences on an introspective path towards enlightenment. "Each performance offers a different perspective, even to me as its composer, delving deeper and deeper into conventional boundaries to create an exploration of art, emotion and spirituality. I look forward to immersing myself into a new experience with the Fiesolana audience this summer." As Italy's longest-running, open-air multi-disciplinary festival, Estate Fiesolana has built a strong reputation as a showcase for top-quality musical and theatre performances since its launch at the stunning Roman amphitheatre Teatro Romano di Fiesole in 1947. With a diverse repertoire spanning classical, electronic, and beyond, Dana continues to push the



Dana Alfardan will perform at the historic 77th Estate Fiesolana Summer Festival in Tuscany on July 17.

boundaries of musical expression, leaving an enduring legacy on the global stage. As one of the most pioneering creative talents of both her generation and the Arab world, Dana continues to captivate audiences serving as inspiration

to aspiring artists across the Gulf region and paving the way for future generations of talent. While the upcoming Estate Fiesolana concert will be Dana's most recent appearance in the Florence region, she performed

Indigo for an exclusive private audience at the Emilio Cavallini Solo Exhibition contemporary art show at Serre Torrigiani in Florence in September 2023. Dana's profile in both Italy and across Europe reached a significant turning point in March 2024, with her original music featured in the play 'Giocando con Orlando', starring acclaimed Italian actor Stefano Accorsi, with performances from the Symphonic Orchestra of Sicily under the baton of conductor Giovanni Pasini at the Politeama Garibaldi di Palermo, Italy. Dana's creative journey continues with the release of her latest single 'Falling', produced in collaboration with French producer Yaans. Available on all major streaming platforms, 'Falling' showcases Dana's versatility as an artiste, seamlessly blending electronic beats with her distinctive style, the statement added.



The HyPEC project, which stands for Hybrid Photo-electro Chemical Production, focuses on producing green hydrogen from wastewater.

Qatar Shell pilot project produces green hydrogen from wastewater

Qatar Shell Research and Technology Centre (QSRTC) has achieved a significant milestone in the production of green hydrogen through its exploratory research project, HyPEC. The HyPEC project, which stands for Hybrid Photo-electro Chemical Production, focuses on producing green hydrogen from wastewater. Green hydrogen is defined as hydrogen that is produced using renewable energy sources, such as solar or wind. The project is a collaboration between QSRTC, Texas A&M University at Qatar as the local academic partner, and the National Chemical Laboratories in India as an external academic collaborator. The project is supported by a grant from the

Qatar National Research Fund. Following the completion of initial testing and a proof-of-concept in university labs, a prototype chemical reactor was successfully set up at the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP). After completing the necessary safety reviews, the pilot programme successfully produced green hydrogen from wastewater and sunlight. Dr Lina Rueda from QSRTC, commented: "Despite facing significant disruptions due to the pandemic and technical challenges inherent in this novel research area, the HyPEC team's dedication and persistence have enabled continued progress. The project has seen promising breakthrough and we look forward to developing the project further."

The HyPEC project is now in its pilot phase and actively producing green hydrogen. This achievement marks a significant scale-up of the technology and supports Qatar National Vision 2030. Dr Konstantinos Kakosimos, associate dean for Graduate Studies and professor at Texas A&M at Qatar, said: "The HyPEC project is another successful story of industry-academic collaboration. It underscores the power of collaboration, innovation, and environmental responsibility. As Qatar continues its journey toward a greener future, we are proud to support QSRTC in the development of renewable energy solutions and building skills and capacity here in Qatar."

QF experts explore ways to preserve Islamic heritage, Arabic language

Experts from Qatar Foundation (QF)'s Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) are developing artificial intelligence (AI) techniques to preserve Islamic heritage and the Arabic language.

They are working on projects that aim to integrate technical innovation with cultural and historical heritage. These projects are using advanced technologies such as machine learning and natural language processing and developing tools and software that enable heritage to be monitored and documented in an effective and comprehensive manner.

Dr Ibrahim Mohamed Zain, professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religion at HBKU College of Islamic Studies, says AI has a key role in preserving heritage and presenting it to people in a systematic and organised manner.

"Through AI, we can preserve heritage and history in a way that has never happened before," he says. "If we look at our history, we find that heritage was preserved orally, then it was passed on to archivists who worked on recording the oral history in manuscripts, and then it developed into books with the invention of printing in the 18th Century."

One project that epitomises this vision is the Digital Sirah Project. The project, whose first phase commenced in 2018 through collaboration between Qatar National Library (QNL) and Agha Khan University, reflects the aspiration of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of QF, to undertake initiatives that serve the Sirah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

In its current phase, the project is curated with the objective of creating the world's most comprehensive digital portal on the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Its aim is to present the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a way that is accessible and en-



Dr Ibrahim Mohamed Zain

gaging to the public, particularly youth, through digital mediums and AI elements.

At HBKU's Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), experts are working on using AI techniques to preserve the Arab linguistic and cultural heritage, as well as to teach, and advance understanding of, the Arabic language and local dialects.

"AI can be useful in deepening our understanding and analysis of Arabic information and culture, and this is what makes it an essential part of the ongoing efforts made by Qatar Computing Research Institute," says Dr Ahmed Ali, a researcher in QCRI's Arabic Language Technologies Department.

QCRI co-operates with many educational institutions in Qatar to train a system for teaching the Arabic language to non-native speakers. It is also used to teach children and young people to pronounce Arabic words, phrases, and sentences correctly, in addition to developing techniques to correct the writing of classical Arabic in terms of grammar and spelling.

The Fanar project, a result of the strategic co-operation between the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and QCRI, is one of the most important and contemporary AI models in the Arabic language.



Dr Ahmed Ali



Dr Mohamed Eltabakh

It relies on a huge dataset containing more than 400bn words of high-quality Arabic text, and uses it to produce accurate, high-quality texts that contribute to enhancing the representation of the Arabic language in the field of artificial intelligence globally.

Dr Mohamed Eltabakh, principal scientist at QCRI, says: "Over the past year, there has been a breakthrough in the field of technology with the emergence of large language models, but these models mostly depend on English texts.

"Fanar will be a large language model that relies on Arabic language and its different dialects as a primary language."

LuLu Exchange relocates Barwa Madinatna branch

LuLu Exchange has relocated its Barwa Madinatna customer engagement centre to a more convenient location in Industrial Area, a statement said. The new centre was inaugurated in the presence of Adeeb Ahamed, managing director of LuLu Financial Holdings, and senior company management. "Our team has displayed exceptional vision by identifying this opportunity, allowing us to better serve the diverse expatriate community in the Industrial Area. This relocation supports our commitment to promoting financial inclusion and empowering individuals," said Ahamed. This strategic move is in alignment with the evolving market dynamics and customer needs, ensuring enhanced accessibility and convenience for its customers. The new customer engagement centre will cater primarily to the vibrant expatriate community residing in Industrial Area, providing tailored financial services designed to support their needs and enhance their quality of life.



Lulu Exchange customer engagement centre at Industrial Area.

Michelin Guide's first Doha edition announced

The Michelin Guide is expanding its renowned culinary reviews to Doha, it was announced yesterday. Michelin Guide's independent, anonymous inspectors have been selecting the city's most outstanding dining venues. In a press statement, Gwendal Poullennec, International Director of the Michelin Guide, said: "Whether enjoying coffee on the Corniche, wandering around The Pearl, having lunch by the waterside in Lusail, or dining after a mesmerising visit to the Museum of Islamic Art or in the dynamic, regenerated Msheireb Downtown Doha, our inspectors have truly experienced it all. "Middle Eastern, Japanese, Peruvian, or fused Nikkei style, Indian and Chinese to name a few, the choice here is endless and doubtlessly certain to appeal to the avid global gastronomic traveller looking for a memorable culinary experience." The arrival of the Michelin Guide in Doha is supported by Qatar Tourism, whose chairman, HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji, said it will enable travellers to better explore the breadth of the



Gwendal Poullennec (left) and HE Saad bin Ali al-Kharji (right) at a press conference yesterday in Doha.

country's culinary and hospitality options, helping to ensure that they have well-rounded stays with memorable experiences. The Michelin Guide was created in 1900 by the Michelin tyre company to support the growth of automobile mobility. Since then, it has remained loyal to its original mission: to settle in mature gastronomic destinations, to guide international travellers and local foodies to the best restaurants, to

highlight world culinary scenes and to promote travel culture. The selection will follow Michelin's historic method based on five universal criteria to ensure consistency between each selection, including: The quality of the ingredients, mastery of cooking techniques, harmony of flavours, personality of the cuisine, and consistency both over time and through the menu as a whole. The Michelin Guide conveys its

restaurant reviews through an extensive system of distinctions, which are awarded to special restaurants within its full selection. The most famous distinctions are its globally renowned Michelin Stars awarded to the restaurant offering the best culinary experiences. One Michelin Star is awarded to restaurants for "high-quality cooking that is worth a stop," two Michelin Stars for "excellent cooking that is worth a detour," and three Michelin Stars for "exceptional cuisine that is worth a special journey." Alongside the coveted Star ratings, the selection also includes the popular Bib Gourmand category, a distinction awarded to restaurants that provide good quality food at a moderate price. The full restaurant selection of the Michelin Guide Doha 2025 will be unveiled at a special event to be held in the last quarter of 2024. It will be available exclusively in digital format on all the Guide's interfaces: website, mobile applications, and social networks. It will join the global Michelin Guide restaurant and hotel selections to be found for free on its digital platforms.

ANNOUNCEMENT

I, **BANDULA WEERARATNA BODHADURA GEDARA**

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**THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE FOR NATIONALITY AFFAIRS**

within 15 days from the publication of this notice.



## Concerts to be hosted during Eid al-Adha



Qatar Tourism has announced two concerts during Eid al-Adha. 'Lailat Elzaman Eljameel' and 'Zikra Remains', are set to take place on June 18 and 19 at Al Mayassa Theater at the Qatar National Convention Centre. 'Zikra Remains,' on June 18, is a musical tribute honouring the late artist Thikra and features performances by Asma Lmnawar and Oumaima Taleb. The 'Lailat Elzaman Eljameel' celebration will feature concert performances from Mai Farouk and Riham AbdelHakim on June 19.



## PHCC observes 'World No Tobacco Day'

The Primary Health Care Corporation (PHCC) joined the World Health Organisation (WHO) and its partners, in observing the World No Tobacco Day on May 31.

This year, the theme "Protecting Children from Tobacco Industry Interference" focused on advocating an end to the targeting of youth with harmful tobacco products.

The main objective was to raise awareness and understanding among the youth about the risks of smoking on lung and heart, as well as to combat all forms of tobacco product marketing that target them. World No Tobacco

Day serves as a platform to globally highlight the negative and detrimental impacts of tobacco on public health, including inhalation, chewing, e-cigarettes, and secondhand smoking.

It serves as a reminder of the hazards associated with smoking, not only affecting individuals' lives but also impacting the economic stability of families and communities, with the ultimate goal of reducing the annual 5.4mn deaths caused by tobacco-related illnesses and smoking.

PHCC offers therapeutic services at its smoking cessation clinics located in various health centres. The total number of

clinics has currently reached 16 clinics, with over 4,800 visits recorded in 2023 for more than 1,900 patients, of whom 25% completed the treatment and managed to quit smoking during the follow-up period. In the first quarter of 2024, the number of visits to the clinics exceeded 1,650 visits for 620 patients, with around 20% of them successfully quitting smoking.

Additionally, PHCC delivers preventive and awareness services through programmes, awareness campaigns and lectures targeting various community groups such as schools, universities and corporations.

## Officials of GCC diplomatic institutes meet

Qatar has chaired the first co-ordination meeting for officials of diplomatic institutes and academies in the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) states, held in Riyadh on June 4-5. HE the Director of Diplomatic Institute at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdulaziz bin Mohamed al-Horr represented Qatar at the meeting. The meeting discussed areas of co-operation and integration between academic and diplomatic institutes in the GCC states in diplomatic training, sharing expertise and organising joint events. (QNA)



## Msheireb Museums, Sidra Medicine host 'Science Cafe'



Msheireb Museums and Sidra Medicine hosted the third edition of the 'Science Cafe' series at the Bin Jelmood House on June 3.

Titled "Life's Beginnings: Insights into Pregnancy, Fertility, and Newborn Screening," delved into the wonders of life's beginnings, exploring critical topics shaping the future of precision medicine in these areas.

In a press statement, Msheireb Museums general manager Abdulal al-Naama said: "I'm proud to see Msheireb Museums as a source of knowledge for our community through events like the 'Sidra Cafe' series focusing on advances in genomic medicine. This is a subject we've explored with our own 'Journey to the Heart of Life' exhibition at Bin Jelmood House, which enhances our understanding of this fascinating field."

"We are proud to be engaging

the public in our journey toward healthcare excellence," said Dr Khalid Fakhro, Chief Research Officer at Sidra Medicine. "By raising awareness about the advancements in research and clinical care happening in Qatar, we not only foster a deeper connection with our community but also showcase our commitment to being at the forefront of medical innovation."

The event featured expert speakers, including Dr Khawla Ismail, who shared insights into pregnancy and topics such as gestational diabetes, antenatal care, and ultrasounds; Prof Johnny Awwad, who focused on fertility issues like in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and endometriosis; Dr Sohaila al-Khodir, who discussed the Omouma (Mother and Baby Cohort) study; and Dr Ammira Akil, who addressed newborn screening and early detection of metabolic and endocrine disorders. Attend-

ees also had the unique opportunity to hear a personal journey shared by Reem al-Muftah.

Fahad al-Turky, manager of Exhibitions and Programmes at Msheireb Museums, said the event showcased the incredible advancements in precision medicine related to pregnancy, fertility, and newborn health.

"Our partnership with Sidra Medicine has been instrumental in bringing these crucial topics to the forefront and engaging the community in meaningful discussions."

Prof Awwad, executive chair of Women's Services and Division Chief of Reproductive Medicine at Sidra Medicine said: "The session on Life's Beginnings was an opportunity to help explain and clear misconceptions about fertility and IVF, a process that can seem daunting for many couples.

"We hope that we were able to highlight that this journey is a partnership and that hospitals like Sidra Medicine are committed to giving them every chance to have a baby and guide them every step of the way."

By bringing together medical professionals, researchers, and individuals with personal experiences, the event successfully fostered dialogue and raised awareness about the latest advancements in precision medicine related to premarital screening, pregnancy, fertility, motherhood, and newborn screening.

## Awqaf opens new mosque at Al Wukair

The Ministry of Endowments (Awqaf) and Islamic Affairs, represented by the Department of Mosques, has opened a new mosque at Al Wukair.

Spread over an area of 2,799sq m, the new mosque can accommodate 852 male and female worshippers.

The opening of the new mosque, according to an official statement, comes within Awqaf's plan to expand the number of mosques and develop them in all regions of the country while keeping pace with urban and population growth. This is in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

With its number MS 541, the mosque has a main prayer hall with space for 744 worshippers, in addition to a women's hall that can accommodate 108 worshippers. With a tall minaret, the mosque also includes a spacious ablution place in addition to a large number of public parking lots, including those for persons with disabilities. The entrances and exits of the mosque are disabled-friendly.

The Department of Engineering Affairs at the ministry is concerned with fulfilling the needs of the regions in the country for mosques and prayer grounds, while providing temporary mosques and supervising their preservation as well as preparing the annual plan for the maintenance of mosques and imams' residences. These are in co-or-



dination with the competent authorities.

In mosque designs, the department takes into account the requirements of different areas along with the guidelines for green and sustainable buildings. Also, the department focuses on the conditions for sustainability in the use of electricity and water, and preserving the aesthetics of heritage in design that reflect the authenticity of Qatari and Islamic heritage of the highest standards.

The Ministry of Endowments'

plans to build mosques also take into account the population density map along with engineering, architectural specifications, and heritage aspects within the framework of caring for the mosques to enable worship and to serve the worshippers.

Awqaf's website provides the facility to search for mosque locations geographically, according to the global navigation system, through accurate and specific maps that facilitate access to mosque locations in all cities across the country.

## Qatari Haj Mission gets licence to open clinics

The medical clinics of the Qatari Haj Mission in Makkah have obtained a licence to open them from the competent medical authorities in the Saudi Ministry of Health. Dr Khaled Abdel Hadi, head of the medical unit in the Qatari Haj Mission, said that the unit completed all medical arrangements and equipment for the clinics. Abdel Hadi added that the medical staff accompanying the mission have all obtained a licence to provide comprehensive medical care starting from the pilgrims arrival in the holy lands until their safe

return to the homeland after performing the Haj. The head of the medical unit noted that additional contracts had been signed with the private Makkah Park Hospital, which is located near the residence of Qatari pilgrims to serve the country's pilgrims in emergency cases, in addition to contracting with other private hospitals in the Makkah Towers overlooking the Holy Mosque to treat cases that require hospitalisation. A contract is also being made with the Saudi German Hospital to receive any Emergency or chronic medical cases. (QNA)

## Revamped Bin Omran Nando's Qatar Now Open 24/7

South Africa's renowned chicken restaurant, Nando's Qatar, is excited to announce that its Bin Omran location is now open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, offering customers continuous access to their beloved PERI-PERI chicken and other signature dishes for dine-in, delivery, and takeaway. In addition to this significant change, the restaurant has undergone a comprehensive revamp, enhancing the overall dining experience.

**24-Hour Marination, 24-Hour Operation: Enjoy PERI-PERI Anytime**

Understanding the diverse schedules of its customers, Nando's has introduced 24/7 operations at the Bin Omran location. This strategic move ensures that patrons can relish their favourite Nando's meals at any time for dine-in, delivery, and takeaway. By doing so, Nando's sets a new standard for casual dining in Qatar, allowing customers to indulge in their favourite dishes whenever they please.

"We recognize the varied schedules of our customers. With the introduction of 24/7 operations at the Bin Omran location, our patrons can now enjoy their favourite Nando's meals at any time for dine-in, delivery, and takeaway. This strategic decision ensures that Nando's delicious offerings are always within reach, setting a new standard for casual dining in Qatar," said Balu Subramonian, Head of Operations at Nando's Qatar.

**Nando's Bin Omran Signature Look Unveils**



Nando's signature interior decor, art, and unique design language transport diners into an exotic world of Afro-Portuguese flavour. The Bin Omran location has been rejuvenated to provide a more enjoyable and comfortable dining environment.

enhanced seating arrangements, and improved lighting, all designed to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Regarding the renovation of Nando's Bin Omran, Vyanktesh Jaiswal, COO of Nando's Qatar and



The revamp includes a redesign of the restaurant's interior, featuring contemporary decor and Southern African art that maintains the distinctive Nando's flair. Customers will appreciate the inviting ambiance,

Oryx Group for Food Services, stated, "Our new interiors pay homage to Nando's Afro-Portuguese roots and Southern African heritage, presenting a vibrant and inviting space. With warm, earthy tones and decor influenced by Southern African artistry, the redesigned restaurant provides an ideal dining environment. The blend of contemporary design with cultural elements makes every visit both visually appealing and rich in heritage."

Nando's invites everyone to visit the newly revitalized Bin Omran location and experience the convenience of 24/7 service. For more information about Nando's Qatar and to stay updated on upcoming events and promotions, follow Nando's Qatar on social media or visit our website at order.nandos.qa.





# Closure of Gaza’s only route out leaves boy, 10, with no treatment for cancer

Reuters  
Gaza

Siraj Yassin, 10, is rolled into the overcrowded Gaza hospital ward in his wheelchair, his light green T-shirt dwarfing his skinny frame since the leukaemia in his blood wrecked his immune system, sapped his strength and left him unable to walk. Chemotherapy would help him, his doctors say. But he can't get it here in Gaza, and he can't

get out of the enclave for treatment now that Israeli forces have shut the only exit through the Rafah crossing into Egypt. "Two weeks ago, I stopped being able to walk. Every day my condition gets worse and I lose something," the boy said. "My bones hurt and everything hurts. I wish to leave Gaza so I can receive the treatment and be able to play like I used to." Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital is one of the only hospitals still functioning in Gaza, where most of the medical system has

been destroyed by Israel's eight-month-old assault. Residents flock here for basic medical treatment, in Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip, the last city that Israeli forces have yet to storm. But doctors say they are helpless to treat seriously ill patients like Siraj, and can no longer send them out of the enclave for treatment since Israel launched its offensive on Rafah last month, shutting the only pedestrian crossing. All they can give Siraj in Gaza is drugs for the pain. "Siraj's case is one of hundreds of cases, whether cancer or meningitis cases, or chronic and acute cases. We have a lot of children who are in need of receiving treatment abroad," said his doctor Ziad Abu Fares. Siraj's mother Mariam said the boy had been granted emergency permission for medical evacuation, and she had hoped to take him out before the border was shut. "We need chemotherapy, as well as a marrow transplant. I wish for the borders to open so that we can leave and my boy is back like how he used to." Israel shut the Rafah crossing last month in its assault on the city on the southern edge of Gaza, where around half of the enclave's residents had been sheltering. It says the offensive there is necessary to complete its aim of destroying the Hamas fighters who stormed Israel in the first week of October. Israel's assault on Gaza has killed more than 36,000 people, according to Gaza health officials.



Siraj Yassin, a Palestinian boy with cancer, receives treatment at Al-Aqsa hospital, amid Israel-Hamas conflict, in Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza Strip.



Palestinians queue for meal rations at a communal food distribution point in Al-Bureij refugee camp in the besieged Gaza Strip, amid the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas group.

## World Central Kitchen supplied more than 50mn meals in Gaza

Reuters  
Washington

World Central Kitchen (WCK) has delivered more than 50mn meals in Gaza and hopes to continue to expand in the war-torn area, according to the aid group, which suspended operations in April when seven of its workers were killed by an Israeli strike. The aid group said it now has two main kitchens in operation in Gaza, and another 65 community kitchens spread throughout the small seaside enclave. The US-based charity founded by celebrity chef Jose Andres restarted operations about a month after the air strike. The deaths on April 1 triggered widespread condemnation and demands from Israel's allies, including the US, for an explanation. The group had almost 100 trucks cross the border from Egypt last week, giving the team much needed supplies to restock all of

the kitchens, spokeswoman Linda Roth said at a briefing. World Central Kitchen also plans to open a new supply route this week in Jordan, where authorities have been very co-operative, Roth said. It is working to distribute ready-to-eat meal boxes in Gaza as well as hot meals, she said. "We are continuing this work with our Palestinian partners. We have about 400 Palestinian response board members and hundreds and hundreds of more volunteers that are working to feed everyone in Gaza. It's Palestinians feeding Palestinians," Roth said. Israel has been under rising international pressure to alleviate severe hunger in Gaza, which has been shattered by Israel's offensive against the Palestinian Hamas group. The conflict began after Hamas stormed southern Israel in the first week of October. Since then, much of the densely populated territory has been laid waste and most of its 2.3mn population displaced. More than 36,000 Palestinians have been

killed, according to the health ministry in Hamas-ruled enclave. The WCK aid workers were killed when their convoy was hit shortly after they oversaw the unloading of 100 tonnes of food brought to Gaza by sea. Israel's military expressed "severe sorrow" over the incident and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called it unintentional. There are no WCK operations in the north of Gaza, which is harder for aid convoys to reach from the southern crossings that are open, said John Torpey, the kitchen's Middle East activation manager. "The communication is still pretty terrible," he said. "It's hard to talk to our convoys." There are some areas food is not getting to in Gaza and there are a lot of areas where people are struggling to find clean water, he said. "We're always looking to expand as much as possible," Torpey said. At least 196 humanitarian workers have been killed in Gaza since October, according to the UN.

## Saudi issues above-average heat warning during Haj

AFP  
Riyadh

Saudi Arabia said yesterday pilgrims can expect average high temperatures of 44C (111F) during the Haj, which last year saw thousands of cases of heat stress. "The expected climate for Haj this year will witness an increase in average temperatures of one and a half to two degrees above normal in Makkah and Madinah," national meteorology centre chief Ayman Ghulam told a press conference. The forecast indicates "relative humidity 25%, rain rates

close to zero, average maximum temperature 44C", he said. The Haj begins on June 14. It involves a series of rites completed over four days in Makkah and its surroundings in the west of Saudi Arabia. Last year more than 1.8mn Muslims took part in the Haj, official figures showed. More than 2,000 people suffered heat stress, according to Saudi authorities, after temperatures soared to 48C. However the real number of heat stress cases — which includes heatstroke, exhaustion, cramps and rashes — was probably far higher, as many sufferers were not admitted to hospitals or clinics. At least

240 people — many from Indonesia — died during the pilgrimage, according to figures announced by various countries which did not specify causes of death. Saudi Arabia did not provide statistics on fatalities. Officials in the kingdom take steps to try to mitigate the effects of heat, including providing air-conditioned tents and misting systems. Ghulam told yesterday's press conference there was "a need for sufficient quantities of water to cover daily consumption as temperatures rise". He also said food for pilgrims should be transported in refrigerators so it does not spoil.

## Hezbollah says fighter killed after Israeli strike in south Lebanon

AFP  
Beirut

Hezbollah said yesterday one of its fighters was killed in south Lebanon as Israel claimed strikes in the border area, the latest deadly violence as clashes across the frontier heat up. Almost eight months of near-daily exchanges of fire between Hamas ally Hezbollah and Israel have intensified over the past week, with repeated strikes on vehicles in Lebanon and the violence spreading again from beyond the country's south into the east. A "strike targeting a motorcycle in Naqura killed one person and wounded another", Lebanon's National News Agency (NNA) said,

after earlier reporting an "enemy drone strike" in the area. Lebanon's Hezbollah group said a member who lived in Naqura was killed, and that its fighters launched "a slew of explosive-laden drones" at Israeli positions in the annexed Golan Heights in retaliation for the attack on the coastal town. It also claimed other attacks on Israeli troops and positions yesterday. The Israeli army said in a statement that "fighter jets struck a Hezbollah fighter" in the Naqura area, as well as hitting other sites. Israel has ramped up its targeting of Hezbollah fighters and allied Palestinian and Lebanese fighters in cars and on motorbikes in Lebanon.

The NNA had reported deadly Israeli strikes on a car and a motorcycle in two south Lebanon locations on Monday, with Hezbollah later saying three fighters were killed by Israeli fire. Late Monday, cross-border exchanges set off blazes in border areas of both Israel and Lebanon. The violence since early October has killed at least 455 people in Lebanon, mostly fighters but including 88 civilians, according to an AFP tally. On the Israeli side, at least 14 soldiers and 11 civilians have been killed, according to the army. Israel captured much of the Golan Heights from Syria in the Six-Day War of 1967 and later annexed it in a move not recognised by the international community.

### Iran vows response if UN N-watchdog approves censure

Iran threatened to respond yesterday if the UN nuclear watchdog approves a new censure resolution proposed by three European governments despite the opposition of the United States, Iranian media said, AFP reported from Tehran. "In case of issuing a resolution against Iran in the board of governors and political pressure from the parties, Iran will respond according to the announcement it made to them," the Fars news agency quoted Iran's atomic energy chief Mohamed Eslami as saying. Britain, France and Germany submitted a draft resolution to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s board on Monday, condemning Iran for its failure to fully co-operate with the watchdog and demanding more accountability. At the last IAEA board meeting in March, European powers shelved their plans to confront Iran due to a lack of US support. The United States denies it is hampering European efforts to hold Iran accountable but fears a censure could aggravate Middle East tensions ahead of a US presidential election in November, diplomats say.

## South African floods kill at least 22 people

AFP  
Johannesburg

Flooding caused by torrential rain and fierce winds on South Africa's eastern coast have killed at least 22 people, local authorities said yesterday. Flooding hit several locations in two eastern provinces, two rare tornadoes were spotted, temperatures plunged and snow fell in some central regions. At least 11 people died in Eastern Cape, a spokesperson from Nelson Mandela Bay municipality, at the heart of the floods, told AFP. More than 2,000 people have been evacuated from Nelson Mandela Bay, notably from makeshift homes in the municipality's slums. Local authorities launched an appeal for donations of clothing, food and blankets.



A man salvages a corrugated iron sheet from destroyed houses in the aftermath of a tornado and extreme weather at an informal settlement in Tongaat, north of Durban, yesterday. The provincial government in neighbouring KwaZulu-Natal also said at least 11 people had died in and around the port city of Durban. Provincial authorities declared a state of alert in KwaZulu-Natal. A provincial government statement said "55 people suffered minor to moderate injuries and are receiving medical treatment in hospital. "At least 120 people have been displaced and three temporary shelters have been established," it added. Durban and its surrounding area in 2022 was the site of the worst flooding in South Africa's history, which provoked mudslides that killed more than 400 people. Rescue services were deployed in both affected provinces on Monday night.

## Nigeria unions suspend nationwide strike to hold more wage talks

AFP  
Lagos

Nigerian union leaders yesterday suspended a nationwide strike to allow for more wage talks after they disrupted flights, shut down the national power grid and closed public offices and schools. The stoppage called by two main unions, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC), came as Africa's most populous nation struggles with soaring inflation and an unstable naira currency. On Monday, union workers shut down the national grid, stalled domestic flights and closed most federal offices, ports, petrol stations and courts to demand the government increase its offer for a higher minimum salary. The government late Monday said the unions had agreed to another week of negotiations to try to reach an agreement. After con-

sultations on the government's position with their members on Tuesday, NLC and TUC said they had called off the strike for seven days. "There is a greater need to create the right ambience for negotiation to continue unhindered," the two unions said in a statement. "The indefinite nationwide strike action is therefore relaxed for one week from today to allow the Federal Government commit to a concrete and acceptable National Minimum Wage." Unions had been demanding a minimum monthly wage of 494,000 naira (around \$330), up from the current level of 30,000 naira. The government said late on Monday it was "committed to a National Minimum Wage that is higher than N60,000" and that the two sides would meet "every day for the next week" in order to reach a deal. The unions are also protesting for the reversal of a steep electricity tariff hike, one of the economic reforms introduced by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.



CRISIS

London hospitals hit by cyber attack

Major London hospitals cancelled some operations yesterday after a cyber-attack on a key service supplier had a “major impact”, particularly on blood transfusions, according to internal memos posted on social media. The attack on pathology partner Synnovis hit King’s College Hospital and Guy’s and St Thomas’ in the centre of the British capital. “I can confirm that our pathology partner Synnovis experienced a major IT incident earlier,” Ian Abbs, CEO of Guy’s and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust, wrote in the memo. “This is having a major impact on the delivery of our services, with blood transfusions being particularly affected.”

CLAIM

China boats seized supplies to Filipino outpost: Manila

The Philippine military said Chinese boats illegally “seized” food and medicine airdropped to a Filipino outpost in the South China Sea. The alleged incident happened on May 19 at Second Thomas Shoal in the Spratly Islands, where Filipino troops are garrisoned on a grounded navy vessel. Beijing has seen a series of confrontations involving Chinese and Philippine vessels near contested reefs. The Philippine military accused China of “aggressive and unprovoked interference” when two Chinese rigid-hulled inflatable boats allegedly came within 10 metres of the Sierra Madre vessel and seized an airdropped package meant for Filipino troops.

OFFBEAT

Tokyo to launch dating app to boost birth rate

Japan’s capital will launch its own dating app as early as this summer as part of government efforts to boost the plunging national birth rate, a Tokyo official said yesterday. Users will be required to submit documentation proving they are legally single and sign a letter stating they are willing to get married. Stating one’s income is common on Japanese dating apps, but Tokyo will require a tax certificate slip to prove the annual salary. “We learned that 70% of people who want to get married aren’t actively joining events or apps to look for a partner,” a Tokyo government official in charge of the new app said.

DISASTER

Lanka deploys army after 26 killed in monsoon storms

Heavy monsoon rains and mudslides in Sri Lanka have killed at least 26 people, the government said yesterday, ordering the army to help tens of thousands displaced. Another 42 people were injured, junior defence minister Premitha Tennakoon told parliament, with 130,000 people forced from their homes by the floods in 23 out of 25 districts across the island nation. “We have deployed the military to assist the relief operations,” Tennakoon said. “Boats have been deployed to help with the supply of relief.” Sri Lanka’s main weather bureau forecast an easing of rains but said the threat of floods had not receded.

Modi claims poll victory though no majority reached

Reuters  
New Delhi

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi yesterday looked set to retain power at the head of a ruling coalition, but his Hindu nationalist party lost its outright majority for the first time in a decade as voters defied predictions of another landslide.

The outcome spooked investors, with stocks falling steeply as emerging results showed that Modi would, for the first time since sweeping to power in 2014, depend on at least three disparate regional parties whose political loyalties have wavered over the years.

This, analysts say, could introduce some uncertainty into policymaking after a decade in which Modi has ruled with an authoritative hold.

Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won a majority on its own in 2014, ending India’s era of unstable coalition governments, and repeated the feat in 2019. Modi said people had placed their faith in the BJP-led coalition for a third time and it was historic, in his first comments since counting of votes began.

“I bow to the people for this affection and assure them that we will continue the good work done in the last decade to keep fulfilling the aspirations of people,” he posted on X.

He also thanked BJP members, saying “words will never do justice to their exceptional efforts”

The blue-chip NIFTY 50 sank 5.9% and the S&P BSE Sensex tum-

bled 5.7%, posting their steepest decline on an election outcome day since 2004, when a BJP-led coalition lost power.

The rupee also fell sharply against the dollar and benchmark bond yields were up.

Markets had soared on Monday after exit polls on June 1 projected Modi and BJP would register a big victory, and the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) was seen getting a two-thirds majority and more.

“The NDA will form the government for the third time. PM Modi will be sworn-in for the third time. Congress will sit in opposition for the third time,” BJP spokesperson Jaiveer Shergill said, referring to the main opposition Congress party.

“Introspection about the slide and the decrease in the seats will be done threadbare. We will put our ear to the ground,” he said.

Two key regional allies in the NDA endorsed Modi as the next prime minister, rejecting local media speculation that they could be wavering in their support or possibly switch sides. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Janata Dal (United) said their pre-poll alliance with BJP was intact and they would form the next government.

The BJP’s numbers were likely pulled down by the party’s poor showing in the country’s most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, which also sends 80 lawmakers to parliament.

The party was leading in 33 seats in the state, down from the 62 it won

there in 2019, with analysts saying bread-and-butter issues had overshadowed the BJP’s appeal to the Hindu majority.

A temple that Modi inaugurated in January had not boosted the BJP’s fortunes as it was expected to, they said.

The opposition INDI alliance led by Rahul Gandhi’s centrist Congress party, won higher than expected seats.

The surprise jump is expected to boost Gandhi’s standing. “The country has unanimously and clearly stated, we do not want Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to be involved in the running of this country, we do not like the way they have run this country,” Gandhi told reporters, referring to Modi’s powerful number two, Home Minister Shah. “That is a huge message.”

Gandhi said Congress would hold talks with its allies today and decide on the future course of action, when asked if the opposition would try to form a government.

Investors had cheered the prospects of another Modi term, expecting it to deliver further years of strong economic growth and pro-business reforms, but the margin of victory emerged as a worry during the counting.

“The key question is whether BJP can retain single party majority. If not, then would its coalition be able to deliver economic development, particularly infrastructure?” said Ken Peng, head of investment strategy, Asia, at Citi Global Wealth in Singapore.



Rahul Gandhi, a senior leader of India’s main opposition Congress party, waves as he arrives at the party headquarters in New Delhi, India, yesterday.

US applauds India’s govt for completing election

Reuters  
Washington

The US applauded India’s government yesterday for completing a massive election undertaking. White House national security spokesman John Kirby also praised the Indian people for voicing their desires and “participating in a very vibrant democratic process.” Top Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi said yesterday voters had told Prime Minister Narendra Modi that they “don’t want” him to remain in power, after election commission figures showed the government projected to return with a reduced majority.

“The country has said to Narendra Modi, ‘We don’t want you,’” Gandhi told reporters at a press conference.

Speaking on the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) poll performance Nistula Hebbar, political editor of *The Hindu* newspaper said “for BJP, complacency was one of the biggest enemies. “We will now see an entirely new Modi, because we’ve never seen him operate a government without a full majority.”

It forces Modi to tread more carefully to ensure backing for more controversial policies.

“With this, we come back to a more traditional form of Indian politics where there will be an alliance government,” said Hartosh Singh Bal, the political editor of

*The Caravan* magazine in New Delhi.

But if Modi can keep his allies onboard, his third term will see the BJP introduce new policies that would likely further blur the line between state and religion – despite India’s secular constitution.

Meanwhile, an Indian Sikh separatist and a staunch opponent of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Kashmir were both set to be elected lawmakers from behind bars yesterday. Firebrand preacher Amritpal Singh, 31, a Sikh separatist leader arrested last year after a month-long police manhunt in Punjab state, defeated 26 other candidates including 17 independents in Khadoor Sahib constituency.

Sunak pledges immigration visa caps

The Conservative party yesterday announced plans for new annual caps on work and family visas to cut immigration after the opposition laid out its plans for the key election issue. The plan laid out by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who is predicted to lose to Labour’s Keir Starmer in the July election, would involve a new cap on the number of visas that would be set by parliament each year. Immigration is a contentious topic this election with net migration levels soaring to 685,000 last year, a figure that both main political parties have said is too high. While lower than the figure in 2022, the level of net migration last year was still around three times higher than in 2019, when the Tories won the last election with a promise to slash migrant numbers. Over the weekend, Starmer set out Labour’s plans to cut regular migration by banning “bad bosses” who violate labour laws from bringing foreign workers to the country, and by requiring employers to prioritise training Britons first.

Hundreds flee as volcano erupts



Evacuees rest at an evacuation centre at a school in a village in Canlaon, Negros Occidental province, central Philippines, yesterday. Hundreds of people sheltered in evacuation centres yesterday after the Mount Kanlaon on Negros island exploded for six minutes on Monday night, sending a plume of ash, rocks and gases 5kms into the sky.

Police seek parents of three abandoned children

AFF  
London

UK police yesterday said they were trying to locate the parents of three young children who were all abandoned separately as newborn babies, after a judge lifted reporting restrictions on the case.

Formal investigations were launched after each discovery in 2017, 2019 and January this year, when a baby girl was found dumped in a shopping bag in freezing conditions in east London. But it can only now be reported that all three cases are linked, and that the children – two girls and a boy – are related.

DNA testing of the youngest child, named Baby Elsa by hospital staff, showed she has a brother, Baby Harry, and a sister, Baby Roman, who were found in the same area in similar circumstances.

The Metropolitan Police has been trying to trace the children’s parents “so far without success”, said detective inspector Jamie Humm.

“We understand the significant public interest that will come following the lifting of restrictions that allow this information to be reported,” he added.

“It is significant news and our work has focused on trying to locate the mother and provide support to her.” Officers have worked around-the-clock probing each case. “We continue to investigate, and will consider the next steps in our investigation,” Humm said.

A family court judge on Monday approved the release of details about the cases, lifting the normally strict reporting restrictions on minors and family matters in the interests of “openness of justice”.

Seoul suspends inter-Korean military pact over trash balloons

AFF  
Seoul

South Korea’s President Yoon Suk-yeol yesterday fully suspended a 2018 tension-reducing military deal with the North in response to a bombardment of trash-carrying balloons sent by Pyongyang last week.

The agreement, signed during a period of warmer ties, was already largely void as Seoul had partially suspended it last year in response to North Korea putting a spy satellite into orbit, prompting Pyongyang to say it would not honour it at all.

But Seoul’s security officials said that respecting even some portions of the deal was hindering their ability to defend against the North’s provocations, which include floating nearly 1,000 balloons carrying garbage such as cigarette butts and manure across the border last week.

President Yoon “has just approved the ‘September 19 (2018) Military Agreement Suspension Proposal” which the cabinet had already signed off on, his office said in a statement.

Yoon’s approval means the agreement is suspended with immediate effect.

The move will allow the South to

resume live fire drills and re-start loudspeaker propaganda campaigns along the border with the North.

The South has used the loudspeaker campaigns – considered a psychological warfare tactic dating back to the 1950-53 Korean War – as a countermeasure to what it deems serious North Korean provocations.

For example, it last deployed them from 2016, after Pyongyang conducted its fourth nuclear test, until calling them off days before the historic 2018 inter-Korean summit where the tension-reducing military deal was signed.

The loudspeaker campaigns

involve South Korea using large megaphones to broadcast everything from K-pop to anti-regime propaganda into areas close to the demilitarised zone separating the two countries, which remain technically at war.

The broadcasts infuriate Pyongyang, which has previously threatened artillery strikes against the loudspeaker units unless they were switched off.

Pyongyang said the trash balloons were retaliation for similar missives sent northwards by South Korean activists.

An anti-Pyongyang group in the South revealed on Monday that they had sent balloons carrying around

2,000 USB flash drives containing songs by South Korea’s mega trot singer Lim Young-woong, as well as other K-pop and K-dramas, into the North on May 10.

The country is extremely sensitive about its people gaining access to South Korea’s flourishing popular culture. According to a United Nations report, Pyongyang enacted a law in 2020 to punish anyone possessing or distributing a large amount of media content from the South with life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

Seoul has also said Pyongyang attempted to jam GPS signals for several days last week.

Pyongyang called off the balloon

bombardment on Sunday, saying it had been an effective countermeasure – but warned that more could come if South Korean activists resumed their campaigns against the North.

Seoul’s joint chiefs of staff said the suspension “restores all military activities” in areas near the inter-Korean border.

JCS spokesperson Lee Sung-jun said that mobile loudspeakers could be operational “right away” while fixed units could take days to install.

“Just because North Korea is dumping trash doesn’t mean we can do the same. That would be a criminal act,” he added.



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GULF TIMES

‘Higher for longer’ rates add to global debt squeeze

The highest interest rates in years are taking a toll from the US to Australia, creating cracks in economies despite low unemployment and booming stock markets. Even where consumer spending looks solid, it's often being funded by borrowing, from credit cards to “Buy Now Pay Later” services. It's all part of the new normal, a world where the floor for rates is much higher and where corporate, household and government borrowers have to accept that this backdrop is sticking around for longer.

That's particularly the case in the US, where the strength of the economy means traders have been reining in Federal Reserve rate-cut expectations since the start of the year.

The European Central Bank is moving faster, on track to lower rates next week, but easing beyond that is an open question.

Federal Reserve officials earlier last month coalesced around a desire to hold interest rates higher for longer and “many” questioned whether policy was restrictive enough to bring inflation down to their target.

Minutes from the two-day Federal Open Market Committee gathering ending May 1 showed that, while participants assessed that policy was “well positioned,” various officials mentioned a willingness to tighten policy further if warranted.

As consumers cut back, American Airlines Group and Ryanair Holdings both said in recent weeks that they misjudged demand.

Bank of Montreal shares plunged on loan-loss concerns, prompting analysts at Scotiabank to respond that “the ‘higher-for-longer’ rate scenario is a reality.”

From weekly shopping to mortgages and big deals in the world of finance, there are examples around the world of the pressures from higher borrowing costs.

US consumers have added \$3.4tn in debt since the pandemic, and much of that is subject to higher interest rates

Now Pay Later is masking the full extent of consumer distress. US consumers have added \$3.4tn in debt since the pandemic, and much of that is subject to higher interest rates, according to a Bloomberg report.

In Canada, record low borrowing costs helped drive one of the world's biggest housing booms. Now persistently higher ones threaten a lengthy aftershock.

The UK's debt-fueled private equity deals are in focus as the Bank of England is reviewing the dangers posed by higher borrowing costs. It will publish an assessment in June amid concerns about the risk the industry poses to the financial system.

The analysis comes after private equity managers snapped up British companies in the aftermath of the Brexit vote, paying for them with huge amounts of floating-rate debt because credit was so cheap.

In Australia, one in 13 hospitality business could fail over the coming year, the highest rate since 2019, according to financial data provider CreditorWatch, as downbeat sentiment and high interest rates hurt the industry.

The number of Brazilian agricultural growers filing for bankruptcy protection surged sixfold in 2023, according to credit data provider Serasa Experian, an alarming rate in a country where agribusiness has been expanding rapidly.

The new era of high interest rates is expected to stay for some time, as persisting price pressures and geopolitical risks continue to challenge central banks in key economies to bring inflation back to their targets.

As high interest rates slow economic activity by dampening overall demand for goods and services, both businesses and consumers may face weaker economic prospects in 2024.

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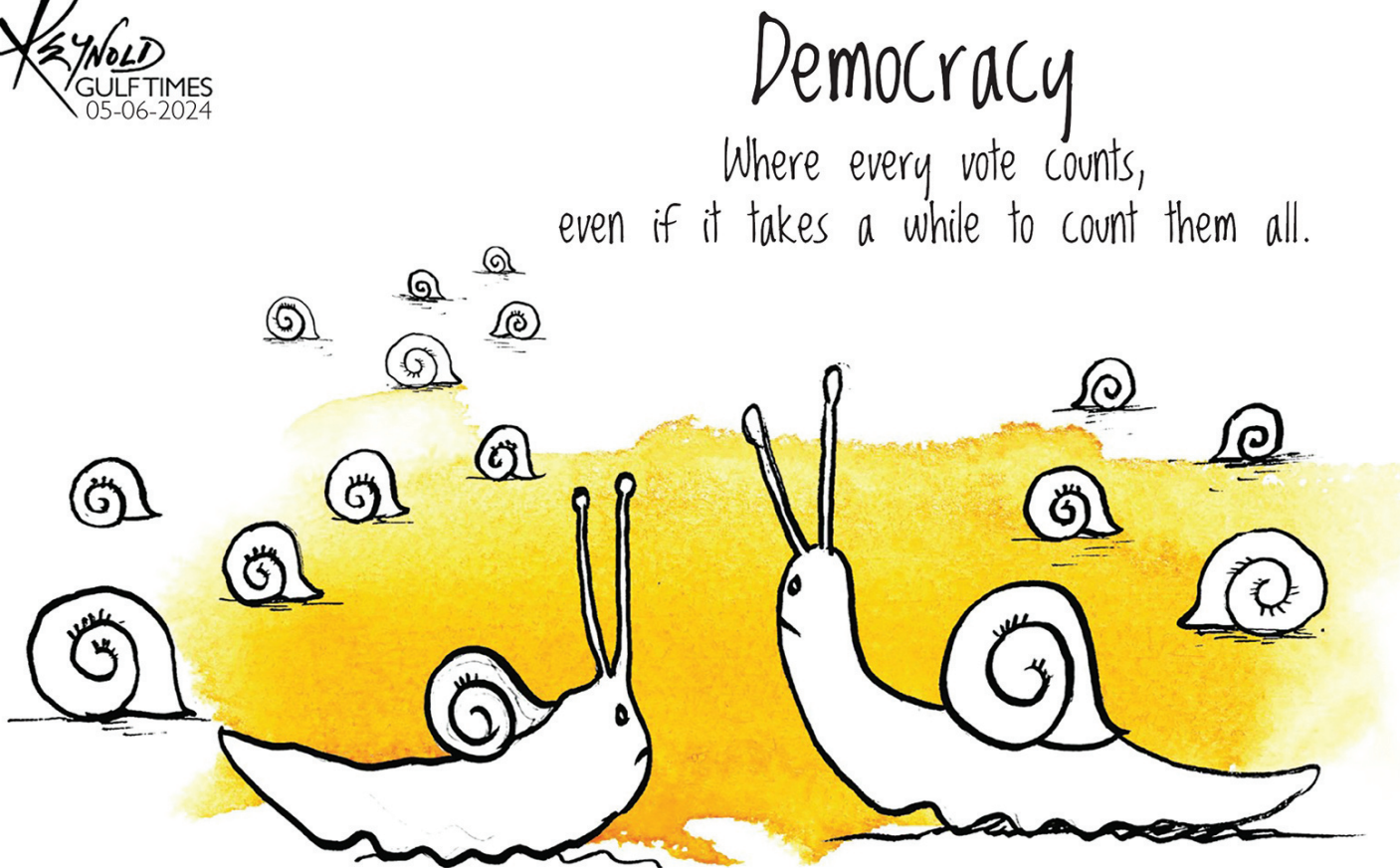
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A signature platform for collective China-Arab co-operation

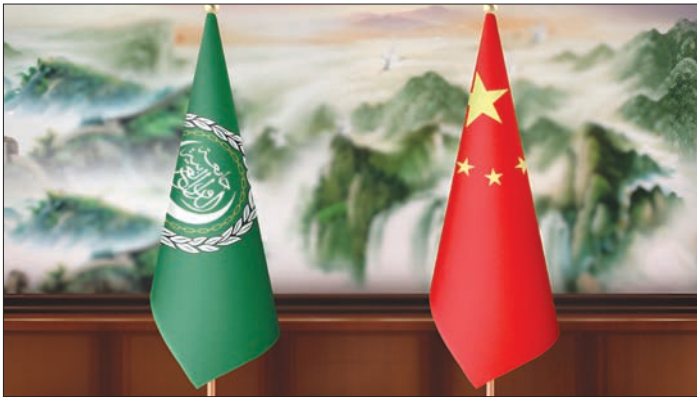


By Cao Xiaolin  
Ambassador of China to Qatar

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of China-Arab States Cooperation Forum (CASCf). The 10th Ministerial Conference of the CASCf was successfully held on May 30, 2024 in Beijing. Leaders and foreign ministers from both China and the Arab States attended the conference.

The theme of the conference was Working Toward a China-Arab Community with a Shared Future. Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a keynote speech at the opening of the conference. The conference adopted three important outcome documents, which are the Beijing Declaration, the Forum Action Plan for 2024-2026, and the China-Arab States Joint Statement on the Palestinian Issue. The conference further built consensus between China and Arab states, planned for co-operation in the next stage, and made a common voice of China and Arab states on the Palestinian question.

The CASCf has made remarkable achievements since its establishment 20 years ago, and has yielded important outcomes in multiple aspects under the care and attention of the leaders from China and the Arab states. China's relationship with many Arab states has developed from a “partnership” to a “strategic co-operative relationship”, and further upgraded to a “strategic partnership”, achieving leapfrog development.



With the efforts of both sides, China-Arab strategic mutual trust has been continuously deepened, practical cooperation has brought tangible benefits to both peoples, people-to-people and cultural exchanges have been further enriched, and active progress has been made in building a China-Arab community with a shared future.

Over the past two decades, CASCf contributed significantly to the development of China-Arab relations, and has become the signature platform for collective China-Arab cooperation and written a splendid chapter in South-South cooperation characterized by mutual respect, mutual benefit and mutual learning.

CASCf is a role model for maintaining world peace and stability. China and the Arab countries respect the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, the independent choice of every nation and the reality formed in history. Our two sides uphold the principle of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs, practice true multilateralism, and defend the legitimate rights and interests of the developing countries.

China is ready to deepen strategic mutual trust with Arab states, and firmly support each other in safeguarding sovereignty, territorial integrity and national dignity,

and strive together for solutions to hot-spot issues that uphold fairness and justice and sustain peace and security. China supports the Arab countries in promoting political settlement of hot-spot and challenging issues with Arab wisdom, and building a common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security architecture in the Middle East.

CASCf is a role model of mutually beneficial co-operation between countries. China and the Arab states have strengthened synergy between our development strategies, and promoted high-quality Belt and Road cooperation. As we consolidate co-operation in traditional areas including economy and trade, energy and infrastructure development, we have broadened new sources of growth such as green and low-carbon development, health and medical services, and investment and finance.

Co-operation in science and technology will nurture new highlights in our relationship. China will work with Arab countries to enhance co-operation on AI to make it empower the real economy and to promote a broad-based global governance system on AI.

CASCf is a role model of harmonious coexistence between civilizations. China and the Arab countries respect the diversity of civilisations, uphold the principles

of equality, mutual learning, dialogue and inclusiveness among civilisations. We advocate that cultural exchanges transcend estrangement, mutual learning transcend clashes, and coexistence transcend feelings of superiority.

Peace, truth, integrity and inclusiveness are the common pursuit of both Chinese and Arab peoples. China is ready to work with the Arab countries to increase personnel exchange, deepen people-to-people co-operation, and promote the sharing of governance experience, and create a fine example of mutual learning among civilisations in the new era.

CASCf is a role model for promoting good global governance. The international community is confronted by regional disputes as well as global issues such as climate change, terrorism, cybersecurity and biosecurity, and deficits in governance, trust, peace and development are getting wider. China and the Arab countries have enhanced co-operation to improve the global governance under the principle of “planning together, building together, and benefiting together”, and worked to address the various challenges and global issues facing humanity.

China will work with the Arab countries to champion an equal and orderly multipolar world and a universally beneficial and inclusive economic globalisation, and strengthen communication and coordination with Arab countries at the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund, BRICS, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and other multilateral platforms.

The past 20 years has proven that CASCf is a builder of world peace, a contributor to global development, a defender of the international order, and a provider of public good. China will continue to work with the Arab countries to carry forward the spirit of China-Arab friendship and build a better future.

Soft power in an era of heightened conflicts



By Sheikh Mohamed bin Thamer al-Thani

In an era where politics and international relations are increasingly intertwined, and challenges are growing more complex, the adoption of effective diplomatic tools by countries has become more urgent than ever. Soft power, one of the most crucial of these tools, plays a significant role in formulating and implementing foreign policy for states and all international actors.

This concept, first introduced by American academic Joseph

Nye in 1990, marked a radical shift in understanding how states influence one another. Hard power, characterised by military and economic coercion, is no longer the sole instrument in determining the course of international relations and political relations or in achieving national interests. The world has witnessed a decline in the use of hard power in international relations due to its high costs and negative consequences.

Soft power serves as a strategic tool in international relations, referring to a state's ability to influence the behaviour of others and attract them through its culture, values, and principles. It achieves its urgent interests without resorting to coercion or hard power, using appropriate means. Nowadays, soft power plays a significant role in guiding, crafting, and achieving foreign policies and national interests. This is especially true

for the ongoing evolution of the international system and the impact of globalisation on states and individuals across various fields. Soft power relies on cultural, value-based, and political appeal and plays a central role in formulating and implementing foreign policy objectives for states.

Soft power appeals to a country's rich culture and steadfast values, enhancing its credibility through practices that reflect these values. It is characterised by its ability to influence and change others' behaviour through persuasion and attraction rather than coercion. Soft power is used to enhance international influence and achieve regional and global stability through diplomacy, economic co-operation, cultural and sports initiatives, and more.

The United States serves as a prime example of a country effectively utilising soft power to advance its goals and interests.

Through a diverse array of tools, including education, media, culture, and cinema, the US has not only bolstered its international standing but also achieved its strategic objectives.

Today, soft power is one of the most important tools in a country's foreign policy arsenal. Its profound and varied impact offers an effective alternative to hard power, enabling countries to achieve their goals more peacefully and sustainably. In an increasingly interconnected and complex world, soft power has become an indispensable tool for positive influence, building bridges of understanding, and fostering co-operation between nations to achieve international security and peace.

● Sheikh Mohamed bin Thamer al-Thani, a Qatar University graduate, majoring in International Affairs. He is the class valedictorian of 2024 Qatar University graduation.



# Biden blocks asylum seekers at the Mexico border

■ **Trump plays ‘show’ ahead of presidential debate**

AFP  
Washington

President Joe Biden will temporarily shut the US-Mexico border to asylum seekers whenever illegal migrant crossings surge, the White House said yesterday, in a dramatic bid to neutralise one of his political weak spots in the reelection battle against Donald Trump.

The 81-year-old Democrat is signing a long-awaited executive order that would ban migrants who enter illegally from getting asylum when numbers top 2,500 in a day, as well as making it easier to deport them back to Mexico.

“To Joe Biden, the safety of American families should always come first,” White House spokesman Andrew Bates said.

Officials said the tough new curbs should take effect straight away as the numbers of people

crossing without proper documentation are already above the threshold. Asylum seekers would again be allowed to enter once the daily numbers dropped to 1,500.

“We do expect that the authority would be in effect immediately,” a Biden administration official told reporters.

Biden himself was due to speak at the White House.

The move would be one of the toughest ever by a Democratic president and see Biden moving closer to Republican Trump’s own signature border policies, amid polls showing the issue heavily dragging on Biden’s reelection chances in November.

Trump blasted his rival’s move, saying Biden “surrendered” the border to illegal immigration.

“Millions of people have poured into our Country — and now, after nearly four years of his failed, weak leadership, pathetic leadership, crooked Joe Biden is

pretending to finally do something about the border,” Trump, 77, said in a video posted to his Truth Social media platform.

He added the border restrictions were all for “show” ahead of their presidential debate later this month.

Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, a Trump ally, quickly labelled the move as “window dressing.”

Trump’s campaign meanwhile repeated his frequent claims that illegal migrants are responsible for surges in violent crime — an allegation not supported by any major police or academic data.

Migrants entering the United States are normally allowed to claim asylum if they face harm or persecution on the grounds of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group.

But many spend years waiting for their claims to be processed,



US President Joe Biden announces an executive order on enforcement at the US-Mexico border as he delivers remarks in the East Room of the White House in Washington yesterday. (Reuters)

with critics saying that people often cross purely for economic reasons and then game the system to remain in the United States.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said on Monday that Biden was dealing with an immigration system that had been “broken for decades.”

Jean-Pierre accused Republicans in Congress of “partisan politics” by failing to co-operate with Biden, and for blocking billions of dollars in funding for the border.

Under Biden, border crossings have surged to record levels, rising to a monthly peak of around

300,000 — 10,000 a day — in December.

Most are from Central America and Venezuela as they flee poverty, violence and disasters exacerbated by climate change, but growing numbers are also coming from other parts of the world to Latin America before making the treacherous trip north to the United States.

The numbers have fallen considerably in recent months, to some 179,000 in April, but polls show it is still one of Biden’s biggest electoral liabilities.

Biden’s plan will anger leftist Democrats and will almost cer-

tainly be challenged in court by civil rights groups.

A second senior White House official moved to defuse criticisms that Biden is effectively copying Trump, saying that while in office the Republican “demonised immigrants, instituted mass raids, separated families at the border and put kids in cages. Their policies went against our values as a nation.”

Trump spent his time in office trying to build a wall on the Mexican border and has drastically ramped up his anti-immigration rhetoric as he seeks a White House comeback.

## Canadian veteran dies on eve of trip to D-Day commemoration

A Canadian World War II veteran has died one day before he was to return to France for the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy, it was announced yesterday. William Cameron was 100 years old.

Canada’s veterans affairs ministry announced his Sunday passing on X, the former Twitter. The next day he had been scheduled to fly to France as part of a Canadian delegation attending ceremonies on Thursday.

“We are saddened by the passing of #SWW Veteran, William ‘Bill’ Cameron,” said the post. “Rest easy, Mr. Cameron.”

Cameron was an anti-aircraft gunner aboard a corvette that escorted American barges during the D-Day landings and the Battle of Normandy.

Born in Brandon, Manitoba, he later moved with his family to Canada’s Pacific coast where he joined the navy in 1943.

He recalled in a video on the website of the Juno Beach Centre museum in Normandy that he and his crew — the only Canadian corvette to reach the beaches during the invasion — was ordered at Omaha Beach to “protect all these fellas on the barges landing on the beaches.” “I’ll tell you it was something awful,” he said, adding that this particular beach had been described as the hardest to take. “We were all very frightened,” he said. “There’s no doubt about that, especially when the (enemy) aircraft were coming right at you.”

“At one point, the captain mentioned me, ‘Good shooting, Cameron.’ I’ll never forget that,” he added.

# Spanish PM’s wife to testify in graft probe

AFP  
Madrid

A Spanish court yesterday summoned Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez’s wife to testify as part of a preliminary corruption probe into her business ties in a case the premier dismissed as a “set-up”.

The Madrid court said it had called Begona Gomez (pictured) to testify on July 5 “as an investigated party” about “the alleged offences of corruption in the private sector and influence peddling”.

The move comes nearly a week after it rejected a prosecutors’ request to close the probe, indicating there was “sufficient” evidence to justify continuing the investigation.

It was a setback for Sanchez but a boost for his right-wing opponents who see it as vindication of their allegations that he and his left-wing government are corrupt.

“There is evidence that an alleged criminal offence was committed” which “goes beyond mere suspicion” and was “sufficient” to let the investigation continue, said court documents seen by AFP.

This contradicts a recent Guardia Civil police report that found no evidence of any criminal offence.

The opposition welcomed the summons but Sanchez said there was no basis to the graft probe. “We are both absolutely at ease. There is nothing behind



this accusation, just a coarse set-up promoted by far-right associations,” he said in a letter posted on social network X, accusing the right of using the case to “try to condition” this weekend’s elections for the European parliament.

The Socialist leader said his decision to remain in office is “firmer than ever” and defended his wife as “a hard-working and honest woman”.

The court opened the probe into Gomez for suspected influence peddling and corruption on April 16 following a complaint filed by an anti-graft NGO linked to the far-right.

The group, Manos Limpias (Clean Hands) says its complaint is based on media reports. It has previously filed a litany of unsuccessful lawsuits against politicians.

When the court rejected prosecutors’ request to close the probe last week, it said it was looking into two letters of support Gomez allegedly provided in 2020 for a joint venture bid-

ding for several public contracts.

The joint venture’s main shareholder was consultant Carlos Barrabes, who had ties to a department at Madrid’s Complutense University that was run by Gomez.

It won the contracts, beating 20 rivals, and was awarded €10.2mn (\$11.1mn).

Although it did not represent the cheapest bid, it received top marks in the sections on subjective appraisal, beating all its competitors in the final accounting.

The court also said it was dropping its investigation into Gomez’s alleged ties to the head of Spanish tourism group Globalia when the company was negotiating a bailout for its airline Air Europa during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gomez, 49, has not spoken publicly on the case but Sanchez has decried it as a political bid to “harass and discredit” him by “media heavily influenced by the right and far-right”.

When the court initially confirmed the probe, Sanchez said in a shock announcement that he would consider resigning. He took five days to reflect and in the end, decided to stay on.

The opposition denounced the move as pure political theatre, saying Sanchez had never had any intention of stepping down.

Opposition leader and PP head Alberto Nunez Feijoo has said Sanchez should resign over the questions regarding his wife’s business dealings.

## Biden: Netanyahu ‘prolonging war for political aims’

US President Joe Biden said Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu may be stalling on ending the war in Gaza for political reasons, according to an interview with *Time* magazine released yesterday.

The comments in the May 28 interview were made a few days before Biden detailed a proposal for a ceasefire in Gaza, and as the Israeli prime minister struggles with deep political divisions at home. Asked whether he thought Netanyahu was prolonging the war for his own political reasons, Biden said: “There is every reason for people to draw that conclusion.”

Biden said he warned Israel not to make the same mistake the US did after the September 11, 2001 attacks that led to “endless wars.” “And they’re making that mistake,” he said.

Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer, asked about the interview, said it was “outside the diplomatic norms of every right-thinking country” for Biden to make such comments about Netanyahu.

Last month, the International Criminal Court’s prosecutor in The Hague requested arrest warrants for Netanyahu and his defence chief over alleged war crimes. The Israeli assault has killed more than 36,000 people in Gaza, according to health authorities there, who say thousands more bodies are buried under rubble.

## 4 Moldovan officials arrested for sabotaging Interpol red notices

Four interior ministry employees were arrested in Moldova yesterday in a vast operation to catch government officials sabotaging Interpol red notices. US and French officers were involved in the operation that targeted 12 suspects and took place in 33 different locations in Moldova, France’s financial crimes prosecutor Jean-Francois Bohnert said in a statement.

The attempt at fraud by mostly Moldovan officials aimed at “obstructing Interpol’s issuance of red notices targeting wanted international fugitives” linked to organised crime, Bohnert said.

“A group of people of different nationalities is suspected of mounting a corruption scheme allowing wanted people to block or delete red notices targeting them, by paying bribes to public agents, especially in Moldova,” he added. Those bribes amounted to “several million dollars”, Bohnert said. Moldovan anti-corruption agents were assisted by FBI officers and those from the French financial prosecutors’ and anti-corruption offices. Sources close to the operation said those targeted had links to organised crime and that all four people detained were Moldovans working for the interior ministry.

# Hunter Biden gun trial opens with focus on drug use

AFP  
Wilmington

Jurors heard unsparing accounts of Hunter Biden’s drug use in his own words yesterday as his trial on gun charges, the first ever prosecution of a child of a sitting US president, got underway.

Hunter Biden, 54, the only surviving son of President Joe Biden, is charged with lying about his illegal drug use when buying a handgun in 2018, a felony.

He is also charged with illegal possession of the firearm, which he had for just 11 days in October 2018.

“No-one is above the law — it doesn’t matter who you are and what your name is,” prosecutor Derek Hines said in his opening statement at the federal trial being held in the Biden family stronghold of Wilmington.

“Robert H Biden chose to illegally own a firearm” when “he was a user of crack and a drug addict,” Hines added, as the court was shown an image of the Colt Cobra revolver at the heart of the case.

The prosecutor played extracts from Hunter Biden’s memoir *Beautiful Things* recorded by Biden himself, in which he recalled his descent into addiction when

he would desperately seek out crack cocaine.

“I cooked (crack) and smoked. I cooked and smoked,” said the extract played to the court, taken from his audiobook.

First Lady Jill Biden was in court again yesterday and had a serious expression as the extracts were played.

Hunter Biden’s lawyer said that he “was not using drugs when he bought that gun” and that it “was never loaded, never carried, never used” during the 11 days he owned it.

Biden, a Yale-trained lawyer and lobbyist-turned-artist, has stated that he has been sober since 2019.

An FBI agent took the stand after both sides gave their opening statements.

A 12-member jury with four alternates was seated on Monday.

Expected to last up to two weeks, Hunter Biden’s trial comes as his father is seeking reelection, and just days after the conviction on business fraud charges of Donald Trump, the president’s likely opponent in November.

The proceedings, along with another trial in which Hunter Biden faces tax evasion charges in California, complicate Democrats’ efforts to keep the focus on Trump, the first former president ever to be convicted of a crime.



Hunter Biden arrives at the federal court with his wife Melissa Cohen Biden in Wilmington, Delaware, yesterday. (Reuters)

Trump also faces three far more serious criminal cases, including for his alleged efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election.

The president did not attend but said he and Jill were “proud” of Hunter Biden. “As the president, I don’t and won’t

comment on pending federal cases, but as a dad, I have boundless love for my son, confidence in him, and respect for his strength,” Biden said in a statement.

He said Monday his son’s difficulties would resonate widely.

“Hunter’s resilience in the face of ad-

versity and the strength he has brought to his recovery are inspiring to us. A lot of families have loved ones who have overcome addiction and know what we mean,” he said.

In addition to being a political distraction, Hunter Biden’s legal woes have reopened painful emotional wounds for the family, stemming from his time as a drug addict and well before.

His brother Beau died from cancer in 2015, and his sister Naomi died as an infant in a 1972 car crash that also killed their mother, Neilia, Joe Biden’s first wife.

If found guilty, Hunter Biden could face 25 years in prison, although as a first-time offender, jail time is unlikely.

The president’s son has long been the target of hard-right Republicans, and Trump allies have investigated him at length in Congress on allegations of corruption and influence-peddling. No charges have ever been brought.

His business dealings in China and Ukraine have also formed the basis for attempts by Republican lawmakers to initiate impeachment proceedings against his father. Those efforts too have gone nowhere.

The White House said last year that there would be no presidential pardon for Hunter Biden in case of a conviction.





Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser attends the opening of the 17th World Congress of Bioethics. **PICTURE:** AR Al-Baker



A panel discussion at the inaugural session. **PICTURES:** Shaji Kayamkulam

# Sheikha Moza attends World Congress of Bioethics

By Joseph Varghese  
Staff Reporter

Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation (QF), attended yesterday the inauguration of the 17th World Congress of Bioethics organised by Hamad Bin Khalifa University in collaboration with World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH).

The three-day Congress, held for the first time in the Arab World and the entire Middle East, has brought together over 1,000 participants – including bioethicists, researchers, and stakeholders.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr Ahmad M Hasnah, president, HBKU, said: “The role of religion is a crucial one in the biomedical area. Discussions shaping bioethical policies should not neglect people’s beliefs, as they are a part of their lives. It is important that they are captured in the development and creation of any policy.”

The Congress is hosted by HBKU’s Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics (CILE) in collaboration with WISH the global health initiative of QF. Sponsored by the Ministry of Public Health, Hamad Medical Corporation, and the Primary Health Care Corporation, this edition of the Congress is organised with support from IAB.

Following the address by HBKU president, a panel discussion involving experts from various organisations discussed different



Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser and Dr Ahmad M Hasnah, president, HBKU at the 17th World Congress of Bioethics. **PICTURE:** AR Al-Baker

perspectives on bioethics. Sultana Afdhal, CEO WISH, Dr Voo Teck Chuan, communications officer of the International Association of Bioethics, Dr Mohamed Ghaly, professor/head of CILE, Dr Said Ismail, acting president and chief scientific and operations officer, Qatar Precision Health Institute, Dr Caesar Atuire, president, IAB, Dr Khalid Fakhro, chief research officer, Sidra Medicine and Dr Julian Savulescu, director, Centre for Biomedical Ethics, National University of Singapore took part in the discussion.

The event provides platform for dialogue centred on vital issues in bioethics, especially in religious and cultural contexts. The event reinforced its theme of “Religion, Culture and Global Bioethics”

with a special panel discussion, which featured members of IAB executive leadership delving into the significance of the theme alongside distinguished figures from across academic and bioethics research.

WISH CEO Afdhal, said: “We are delighted to see months of hard work come to fruition as we witness the gathering of the world’s most renowned bioethicists and scholars in Qatar for the 17th edition of the World Congress of Bioethics. Balancing international perspectives and evidence-based best practices in health with those rooted in the religious values and cultural traditions of Qatar, the Gulf region, and the broader Arab-Muslim world has been a cornerstone of our approach at WISH.”

The Congress helped par-

ticipants exchange insights on prominent and emerging topics in bioethics, including the use of artificial intelligence in healthcare, how healthcare can be practiced safely in regions impacted by war and armed conflict, and public health ethics in light of Covid-19 and other pandemics. Prominent experts from the Middle East, North Africa and Asia are participating in the discussions and offer regional perspectives on the wider field and issues such as disability, environmental, genetic and genomic bioethics.

Mohamed Ghaly, head of CILE and chair of the Congress, added: “This special edition of the World Congress of Bioethics gives us the opportunity to approach the study of bioethics from a unique context. Our discussions revolve around



A section of the audience.

## HBKU to establish International Islamic Bioethics Association

From Page 1

He highlighted the leadership and vision of Her Highness Sheikhha Moza bint Nasser on the important role of ethics in the current and future life led to the creation of the first Research Center for Islamic Legislation and Ethics in January 2012.

“CILE is an integral part of that vision and plays an important role in leading the international platform in discussions and work related to Islamic ethics and we, at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, are committed to continue having CILE play a leading role in the generation of knowledge in the domain of Islamic ethics across different disciplines especially the area of bioethics and impact the local, regional, and global discussions,” he added.

the understanding that our field is not only a secular discipline, but also one that acknowledges the

importance of respecting diverse socio-cultural and religious-moral traditions.”

# Remarkable turnout as DTF concludes with ‘Between Two Hearts’ performance



By Tawfik Lamari  
Staff Reporter

The performance of the play ‘Between Two Hearts’, has been the last of ten performances presented at the 36th Doha Theater Festival (DTF) held under the theme “Let us make the Theatre the Mirror of Our Lives,” from May 25-June 4, at the U Venue Theatre.

The DTF achieved a remarkable turnout.

The play “Between Two Hearts” was produced by

Msheireb Artistic Productions, written by Talib al-Dous, and directed by Mohamed Yousef al-Mulla.

Talib al-Dous, the author of the work, confirmed that the play deals with the life of a leader who controls the village and its farmers, their livelihoods, enacts unjust laws for his interests and the interests of his brother, the merchant, and he also kills the farmer’s son. To save his son’s life, the farmer revolts alone, demanding retribution.

Regarding the message of the work, director Mohamed

al-Mulla said: “Every scene is a play between two hearts that deals with one of the societal issues, whether they are local issues, global issues, and others related to the Arab world. At the same time, the author placed these issues in a sequential and unified dramatic form, pointing out that among the issues the play deals with, is the issue of land, Palestine, and the occupied territories, in addition to issues of social communication as well.

He pointed out that the work is distinguished by the fact that each character has a



specialised role, and each character deals with diversity and mobility. The playwright was keen to write it in an indirect way, so that it belongs to several countries and landmarks and it is not related to one world.

Al-Mulla explained his keenness on diversity among the actors he attracted from various Gulf countries, with the aim of diversi-

fying the Gulf culture in his work and the cultural exchange that adds to the festival and the director as well. A number of artists and guests from the Gulf and the Arab world visited the festival, and expressed their admiration for the Doha Theater Festival as well as the activities and theatrical performances that contributed to the discovery of new talents and faces.

## HIA underlines commitment to environmental sustainability

Hamad International Airport (HIA) has reaffirmed its commitment to environmental sustainability by actively supporting the United Nations for World Environment Day 2024, a statement said yesterday.

This year, HIA celebrates significant milestones in waste management, water conservation and decarbonisation.

HIA is on the right path towards its 2030 target aiming to reduce 30% of its relative carbon emissions, in line with its environmental sustainability goals. The LED lighting initiatives launched in 2018, saw over 65,000 luminaires being converted to LED, resulting in the airport saving approximately 3mn kWh of energy in 2023.

HIA has also adopted other innovative technologies and operational procedures, including optimised HVAC management,



This year, HIA celebrates significant milestones in waste management, water conservation and decarbonisation.

smart-metering for electricity and water and investing in sustainable building solutions which led to the airport achieving Global Sustainability Assessment System Design & Build (GSAS-D&B) 4-Star certifications, from Gulf Organisation for Research &

Development (Gord).

HIA has implemented advanced waste management strategies, yielding significant results. Between April 2023 and March 2024, as much as 81% of the airport’s waste was reused, recycled, or converted into energy



HIA actively composts organic waste, transforming food scraps and other organic materials into nutrient-rich fertiliser for landscaping.

– marking this one of the highest conversions in the airport industry, including over 1,000 tonnes of segregated plastic waste. This success is credited to streamlined sorting and collection systems, along with clear signage and user-friendly infrastructure that enable passengers to effectively separate waste streams.

The airport has established

strategic partnerships with local waste management facilities to divert waste from landfills, notably, in collaboration with the Ministry of Municipality. The airport diverted mixed general waste from landfills to the Domestic Solid Waste Management Centre, achieving a diversion rate of 48% and diverting over 18,000 tonnes of waste from April 2023 to March 2024. HIA actively composts organic waste, transforming food scraps and other organic materials into nutrient-rich fertiliser for landscaping. The airport is also exploring the recycling of dry sludge for bio soil production and the conversion of food waste into grey waste for further recycling.

HIA exemplifies responsible water management by using 100% Treated Sewage Effluent (TSE) for irrigation, through its advanced wastewater treatment plant. From April 2023 to March 2024, the air-

port treated over 3mn cu m of sewage for irrigation. This not only preserves valuable freshwater resources but also underscores the airport’s commitment to sustainable operations.

HIA has retained its environmental accreditations which includes Airport Carbon Accreditation at Level 3 – conferred by the Airport Council International and the Environmental Management System (ISO 14001) Certification by the British Standards Institution. HIA is committed to advancing environmental stewardship through collaborative initiatives with airlines, ground handling companies, and various stakeholders within the aviation industry.

“In our ongoing efforts to promote sustainability, the airport is spearheading trials of innovative initiatives aimed at minimising waste and maximising resource efficiency,” the statement added.